Domestic Girlfriend

1

KEI SASUGA

Domestic Girlfriend

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DOME
GIRL

KEI SASUGA

DOME GIRL

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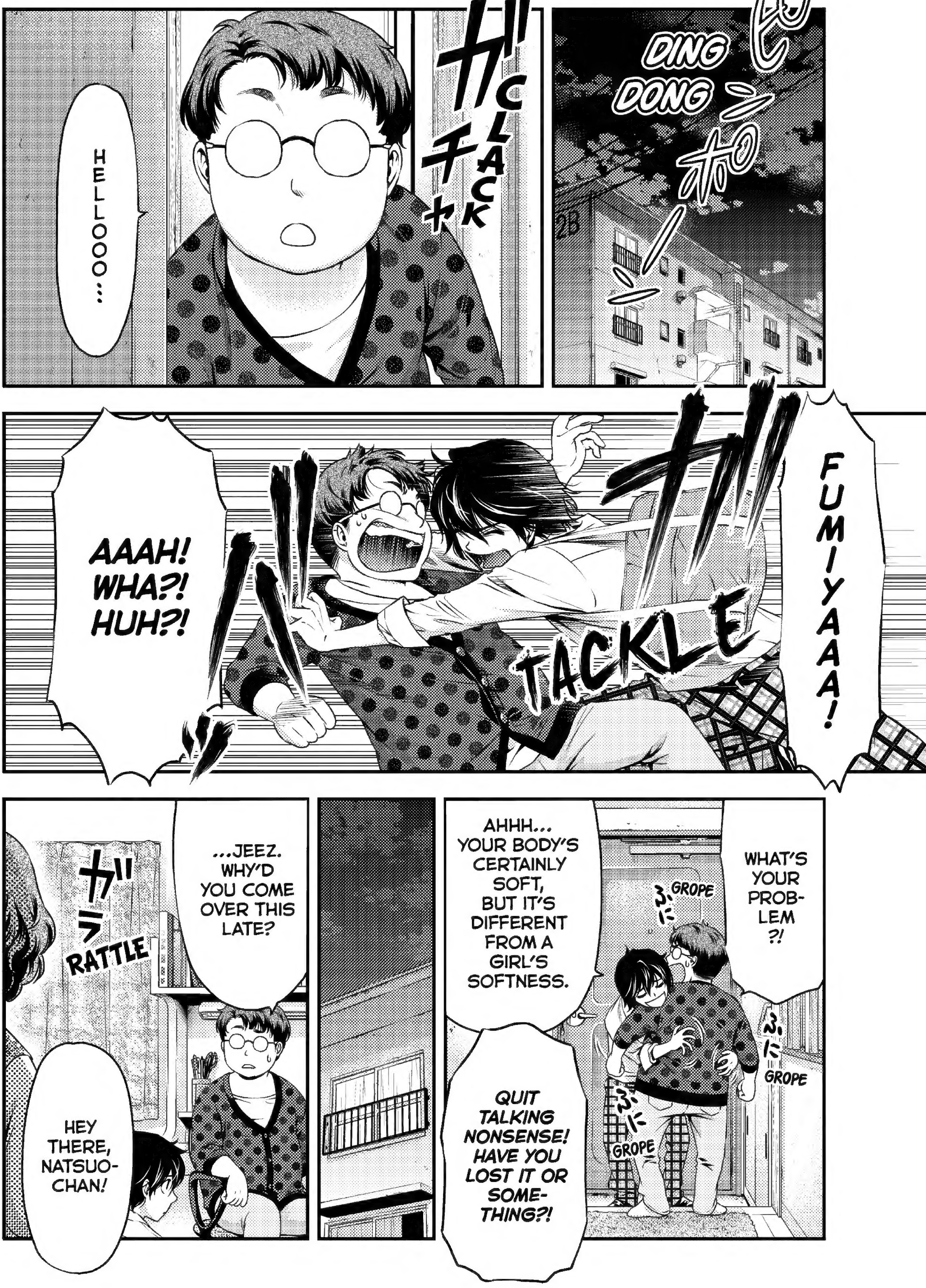
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA, OKAY?
THIS DOESN'T MEAN...
...WE'RE DATING OR ANYTHING.
I FEEL SO OUT OF IT.
WE AREN'T GOING TO EXCHANGE NUMBERS.
EVEN THOUGH NONE OF THIS SEEMS REAL...
IT'S WITHOUT A DOUBT, HAPPENING.
THIS IS PROBABLY JUST A ONE-TIME THING.

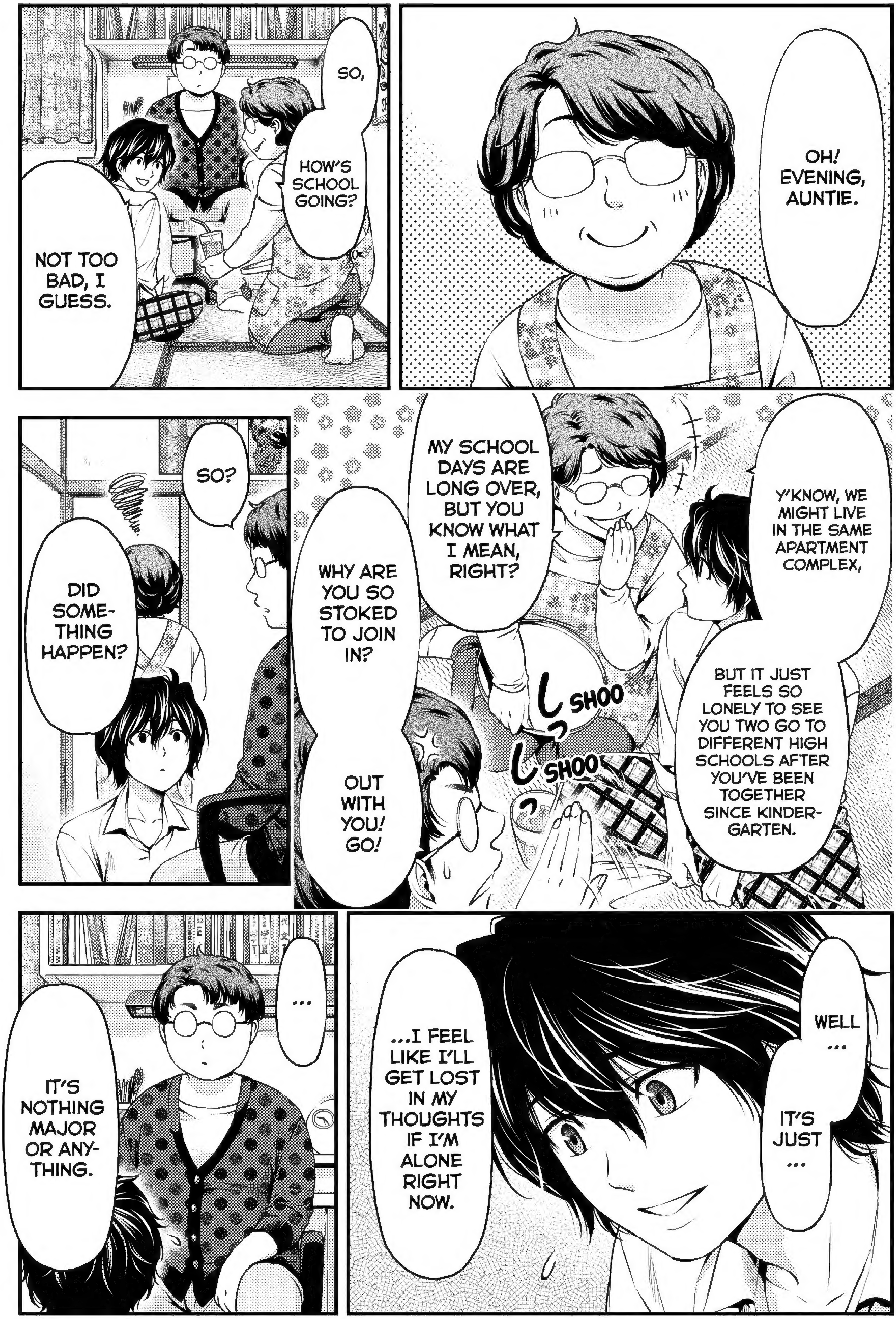
CHAPTER 1: I WANT TO GROW UP SOON

JUST A MOMENT AGO...
...I LOST MY VIRGINITY.

DOME X GIRL

アイフレ
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
THIS IS JUST OUR SECRET, OKAY?
... YEAH.
...


ピンポーン
DING DONG
2B
ガチャ
CLACK
HELLOOO…
FUMIYAAA!
ガバ
TACKLE
AAAH! WHA?! HUH?!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?!
AHHH… YOUR BODY'S CERTAINLY SOFT, BUT IT'S DIFFERENT FROM A GIRL'S SOFTNESS.
ふに GROPE
ふに GROPE
ふに GROPE
QUIT TALKING NONSENSE! HAVE YOU LOST IT OR SOMETHING?!
ガラ
RATTLE
…JEEZ. WHY'D YOU COME OVER THIS LATE?
HEY THERE, NATSUO-CHAN!


OH! EVENING, AUNTIE.
SO,
HOW'S SCHOOL GOING?
NOT TOO BAD, I GUESS.
Y'KNOW, WE MIGHT LIVE IN THE SAME APARTMENT COMPLEX,
BUT IT JUST FEELS SO LONELY TO SEE YOU TWO GO TO DIFFERENT HIGH SCHOOLS AFTER YOU'VE BEEN TOGETHER SINCE KINDERGARTEN.
MY SCHOOL DAYS ARE LONG OVER, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, RIGHT?
WHY ARE YOU SO STOKED TO JOIN IN?
OUT WITH YOU! GO!
SHOO
SHOO
SO?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
WELL...
IT'S JUST...
...I FEEL LIKE I'LL GET LOST IN MY THOUGHTS IF I'M ALONE RIGHT NOW.
...
IT'S NOTHING MAJOR OR ANYTHING.

REALLY, I'M NOT CONCERNED ONE BIT.
……… …
...
RATTLE カララ . .
IT'S NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT, FUMIYA—
IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, THEN JUST SAY IT!
HWAH?!
YOU DID IT WITH A GIRL TODAY?!
YANK
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT "SEX," RIGHT?!
DON'T YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON SOMEONE? WHY'D YOU GO AND DO THAT?!
IT JUST SORTA HAPPENED ...
BURST

Y'KNOW, NATSUO...
WHENEVER PEOPLE TELL ME ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS...
...IT'S GUYS WHO SAY SHIT LIKE, "IT JUST HAPPENED..."
WHO PISS ME OFF THE MOST!
いでででででで
OW OW OW OW OW OW!
ギリ GRR
GRR ギリ
...
UHH...
SO AT LUNCH TODAY...
...I WAS INVITED TO A MIXER, RIGHT?
GET THIS, I HEARD ASHIHARA GOT AXED AT HIS LAST SCHOOL FOR SCREWING A STUDENT.
SERIOUSLY? Y'MEAN HE'S ONE OF THOSE "LEWD TEACHERS?"
IDIOT. DON'T GET CAUGHT IF YOU'RE GONNA DO IT.
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THE GIRL RATTED HIM OUT.
HUH?! YOU THINK HE FORCED HER?
RAPE...?
MUTUAL, BUT MAYBE HE GAVE HER THE COLD SHOULDER AFTERWARD OR SOMETHING.
YEAH?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, NATSUO?
HUH?

HOW WOULD I KNOW?
C'MON, JUST TAKE A GUESS!
OR MAYBE... THEY WERE CAUGHT DOING IT AT SCHOOL AND–
SLAP
HWAH ?!
!!
ARE YOU GUYS GOSSIPING AGAIN?
I SWEAR, BOYS THESE DAYS ARE AS BAD AS BORED HOUSEWIVES.
WHAT'S THIS?
ARE YOU AFTER MY ASS, NAY, MY BODY, HINA-CHAN?!
I'M ALL YOURS!
THAT'S HINA-SENSEI TO YOU!
AND SORRY, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED IN LITTLE BRATS!
HUH ?
YOU'RE ONLY 23!
FUJII-KUN, TRY NOT TO LET PLAYERS LIKE KINE-KUN CORRUPT YOU, OKAY?
HOW COME NATSUO'S THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS SPECIAL TREATMENT?
I SMELL FAVORITISM!
I MEAN, SURE, NATSUO HAS GOOD GRADES, BUT C'MON!

ISN'T HINA-CHAN GREAT?
SHE'S CHEERFUL, CUTE, AND A GOOD TEACHER! MAN, WHAT I'D GIVE TO DATE HER...
AS IF SHE'D EVER GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY.
DOESN'T SHE HAVE A BOYFRIEND, ANYWAY?
WELL, YEAH, BUT...
I MEAN IF SHE WAS SINGLE.
WELL,
LET'S ENJOY THE STUDENT LIFE AS STUDENTS, SHALL WE?
ARE YOU GUYS FREE TWO DAYS FROM NOW?
I GOT TO KNOW THIS GIRL FROM SAKURAGAWA HIGH AT CRAM SCHOOL.
IT'S A LITTLE FAR AWAY, BUT WE TALKED ABOUT HAVING A MIXER.
SERIOUSLY?! I'M IN!
WAIT, DON'T YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND?
YEAH, AND?
YOU'RE COMIN', TOO, RIGHT, NATSUO?
I KNOW YOU'RE SINGLE.

CHEERS!
PHEW. I GUESS IT'S TRUE THAT FRIENDS OF CUTIES ARE JUST AS CUTE!
IT WAS WORTH THE TRIP!
SORRY TO MAKE YOU GUYS COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.
DON'T SWEAT IT!
ALRIGHTY, LET'S START WITH INTRODUCTIONS.
AFTER YOU!
HEEEY!
MY NAME'S RIKA, AND I'LL BE YOUR HOST FOR THE EVENING!
I GO TO THE SAME CRAM SCHOOL AS YUU-KUN!
I'M MIINA, RIKA'S FRIEND AND IDOL OF SAKURAGAWA HIGH.
OH, PLEASE! GET OVER YOURSELF!
I'M KANAE, ALSO RIKA'S FRIEND.

OKAY, IT'S YOUR TURN, RUI.
OH ...
...
RUI TACHIBANA.
...
C'MON, RUI! TRY TO ACT A LITTLE MORE EXCITED!
NOW FOR THE GUYS.
SIGN: KARAOKE CASTLE
カラオケ城
カラオケ城
PHEEEW!
YOU HAVE A GREAT VOICE, MIINA-CHAN!
THAT WAS AWESOME! YOU GUYS WERE IN SYNC DURING THE CHORUS.

WHO'S NEXT?
SHINING ROAD
ME! I'LL GO!
OOH! I'VE BEEN WATCHING THE DRAMA THIS THEME IS FOR.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
RUI-CHAN!
LET'S SING TOGETHER!
...I DON'T KNOW THIS SONG.
HUH? YOU DON'T ?!
IT'S SUPER POPULAR LATELY.
...POPULAR SONGS THESE DAYS HAVE SUCH SHALLOW LYRICS.
NOT TO MENTION THEY ALL SOUND THE SAME.
...
ERR...
THEN I'LL SING THIS TIME!
S-SURE!
SORRY, RUI'S KINDA WEIRD. SHE ONLY LISTENS TO OLDIES.

FSSSH
DRINK BAR
ARE YOU BORED?

WHAT?
ARE YOU HERE TO COMPLAIN I'M A WET BLANKET?
NO...
ANYONE WOULD WONDER WHAT'S UP IF YOU'RE IN A BAD MOOD THE WHOLE TIME!
I'M NOT IN A BAD MOOD.
THIS IS HOW I ALWAYS AM.
I'M JUST NOT USED TO MIXERS,
SO I DON'T KNOW TO FIT IN.
AH... IS THAT ALL?
SO YOU'RE NOT TRYING PICK A FIGHT...
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
OH, NAH...
I'M PRETTY MUCH IN THE SAME BOAT.
HUH?
TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT USED TO THIS KINDA THING, EITHER.
FSSSH
ジャ...

YOU COULD SAY...
I'M ONE OF THOSE "HIGH-SCHOOL DEBUT" KIDS.
I WAS A FOUR-EYED DORK UP UNTIL MIDDLE SCHOOL AND NEVER WENT TO ANY MIXERS,
SO I KINDA KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM.
FOUR-EYED DORK...
A NOSY FRIEND OF MINE DRAFTED UP A MAKEOVER PLAN FOR ME...
CONTACTS!
THERE!
SAG YOUR PANTS...
...SO I WOULDN'T GET PICKED ON AT MY NEW SCHOOL.
OH, YEAH, YOU LIKE OLDER SONGS, RIGHT?
LIKE WHAT?
MASASHI SADA'S "SAKIMORI NO UTA" AND MIYUKI NAKAJIMA'S "INOCHI NO BETSUMEI.*"
PHEW...
YEAH, THOSE DEFINITELY DON'T HAVE LIGHT-HEARTED LYRICS.
YOU KNOW THEM?
MY DAD LIKES POP SONGS OF THAT ERA.

*TRANSLATED AS "AN ODE BY A COASTAL GUARD" AND "LIFE BY ANOTHER NAME", THE SONGS RUI REFERS TO BOTH HAVE RELATIVELY HEAVY LYRICS DEALING WITH LIFE, SUFFERING, AND EXISTENTIALISM.

HMM...
I CAME TO HELP MAKE MYSELF GIVE UP...
...BUT I MUST BE WORSE OFF THAN I THOUGHT IF I'M SEEING SENSEI IN THIS GIRL.
ANYWAY...
...YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW SINCE YOU'RE NOT USED TO IT...
...BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY GET THE HANG AT MIXERS IF YOU KEEP GOING TO THEM, I THINK.
SAYS THE GUY WHO'S NOT USED TO THEM, EITHER...
HEY...
DON'T TRIP ME UP WHEN I'M TRYING TO ENCOURAGE YOU...
THAT ATTITUDE DOESN'T HELP.
ブッ GRUMBLE
ブッ GRUMBLE
...
HEY...

WHY DON'T WE...
...SNEAK OUT TOGETHER?
HUH ...?
WHY?

THINK THE OTHERS ARE WORRIED?
IT SHOULD BE FINE. SNEAKING OUT OF MIXERS IS IMPLICITLY FAIR GAME.
WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?
COULD SHE HAVE FALL–
ドキ BADUM
ドキ BADUM
IF YOU THINK I'VE "FALLEN" FOR YOU, THEN YOU'RE WRONG.
キッパリ FIRM
BUT ...
I'D LIKE ...
...TO ASK YOU FOR A FAVOR.
WILL YOU HEAR ME OUT?
HUH?
UH,
SURE.
FINE BY ME ...

WHAT KINDA FAVOR COULD SHE MEAN?
ALL I CAN THINK OF GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IS...
PLEASE!
PRETEND TO BE MY BOYFRIEND FOR A DAY!
...WAIT, THAT'S TOO MUCH LIKE OUT OF A DRAMA.
MAYBE SHE WANTS TO DRAG ME SOMEWHERE QUIET AND...
YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR MAKING FUN OF ME!
GET HIM, BOYS!
ANYTHING BUT THAT, PLEASE!
JUST WHERE IS SHE TAKING ME?!
ポーン
DING
COME IN.

!!!
UH ...
WHERE ARE WE?
WHO AM I?
THIS IS MY HOUSE.
AND YOU'RE HARUO FUJII.
NATSUO, ACTUALLY...
OH, SORRY.
SHE BROUGHT ME TO HER HOUSE?!
NO ONE WILL BE COMING HOME SOON.
MY ROOM'S THIS WAY.

...!
カチャ
CLACK
ど
FUMP
ボ
ス
POMF
UM... I'M NOT SURE WHAT'S GOING ON...
A GIRL'S ROOM ?!
WHAT THE ...?
I'VE ONLY BEEN IN MY COUSIN'S BEFORE!
HUH ?!
I STILL HAVEN'T—
FUJII-KUN...

WILL YOU HAVE SEX WITH ME?
...
HUH?
YOU CAN LEAVE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
IT ... IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT TO, BUT...
...
WHY ...?

I JUST...
...WANT TO EXPERIENCE IT.
HUH?
LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE...
...PEOPLE IN THE KNOW TALK DOWN TO PEOPLE WHO AREN'T, RIGHT?
"OH, YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND." THINGS LIKE THAT.
IF I'M GOING TO BE TREATED LIKE A CHILD AND LEFT OUT OF CONVERSATIONS...
THEN I'D RATHER KNOW FOR MYSELF FIRSTHAND.
THIS IS THE REASON I WENT TO THE MIXER TODAY.

I KNOW THIS SORT OF THING SHOULD BE DONE WITH SOMEONE YOU LIKE...
...BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYONE LIKE THAT.
AND I DON'T PLAN TO, EITHER.
HANG ON!
FOR STARTERS,
WHY ME?
SOMEONE LIKE YUUYA IS CLEARLY NO STRANGER TO THIS KINDA THING.
NO DOUBT. YOU'RE CLEARLY NOT USED TO THIS.
ドスッ SHNK
OBVIOUS VIRGIN
UGH...
THAT'S WHY I PICKED YOU.
I DON'T WANT TO BE ANOTHER TALLY ON SOME PLAYER'S CONQUEST.
WELL?

...
S-
SURE ...

AFTER THIS...
...HOW DID IT GO IN THOSE VIDEOS AGAIN?

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT BEING OUT THIS LATE?
HUH...? YEAH, IT'S JUST MY DAD AT HOME, ANYWAY.
SO, WHAT DID YOU THINK...
...HAVING EXPERIENCED IT?

...
MMM...
“SO, THIS IS IT, HUH?”
...I GUESS.
OH... I DON'T MEAN YOU WERE GOOD OR BAD.
I WOULDN'T KNOW, ANYWAY.
I WAS JUST SURPRISED...
...THAT I PRETTY MUCH STAYED THE SAME.

...AND SO...
...HERE WE ARE.
SHAKE わな
SHAKE わな
SHAKE わな
WHAT... THE...HELL IS THAT?! NOT EVEN EROGE* HAVE ROUTES THAT SHORT!
GNAW ガジ
THREE CHOICES AND YOU'RE IN!
GNAW ガジ
Want to sneak out together? YES NO
I have a favor to ask... YES NO
Wanna do it? YES NO
GNAW ガジ
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER!
SO WHY DOES A LUCKY BOY LIKE YOU LOOK SO GLUM?
SHE WAS CUTE, RIGHT?
AFTER WE PARTED, AT FIRST I WAS STOKED NOT TO BE A VIRGIN ANYMORE.
BUT AS TIME WENT ON...
...I STARTED TO WONDER IF LOSING IT THIS WAY...
...WAS REALLY A GOOD IDEA OR NOT.

*A CONTRACTION OF "EROTIC GAME", *EROGE* ARE PORNOGRAPHIC, LARGELY TEXT-BASED GAMES IN WHICH THE OBJECTIVE IS TO PROGRESS THROUGH CHARACTERS' "ROUTES" IN ORDER TO WOO THEM.

AND LIKE YOU SAID EARLIER,
I ALREADY HAVE A CRUSH ON SOMEONE.
WHO CARES IF IT WAS A GOOD IDEA OR NOT?
I MEAN, IT'D BE IDEAL IF YOU LOST IT TO THE GIRL YOU LIKE...
...BUT IN YOUR CASE, THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN, RIGHT?
KATHUNK
ガチャ
I'M HOME.
THE PHONE AGAIN?
HE'S ON IT A LOT LATELY.

CREAK
ギシ…
HUH?
HEY, ANY IDEA WHERE NATSUO IS?
NOPE.
MAN...I WANTED TO ASK HIM WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MIXER YESTERDAY.

HE'S ALWAYS HAD A HABIT OF UP AND DISAPPEARING.
...
OH!
LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT ALONE.
OH, MY!
IF IT ISN'T FUJII-SENSEI!

PLEASE DON'T CALL ME THAT...
C'MOOOON.
AWW, AND HERE I THOUGHT I'D HAVE THE ROOF ALL TO MYSELF SINCE IT'S CLOUDY.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU WANT TO PRETEND YOU'RE ALONE.
JUST THINK OF ME AS AIR.
I CARE!
ABOUT...
...HOW YOUR NOVEL'S COMING ALONG, FOR INSTANCE.
バ FLAP
バ FLAP
HOW STINGY...
YOU PROMISED TO LET ME READ IT FIRST IN EXCHANGE FOR KEEPING IT A SECRET.
ぶー BOOO
I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE WHILE I'M STILL WORKING ON IT!
AWW. I SHOULD'VE READ IT BEFORE I GAVE IT BACK TO YOU THEN.

DID YOU WRITE THIS?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
HUH?
YOU USED TO COME HERE A LOT WHEN YOU WERE DOWN.
NOT REALLY!
I'M JUST HERE TO SPACE OUT!
AH ...

TIME SURE FLIES.
ALMOST A YEAR'S GONE BY ALREADY.
WHEN I FIRST STARTED...
I COULDN'T RUN A CLASSROOM TO SAVE MY LIFE.
WHEN I GOT DEPRESSED AND HID UP HERE...
...I RAN INTO YOU AND ENDED UP SPILLING MY GUTS AND EVEN HAD YOU ENCOURAGE ME.
THAT REALLY CHEERED ME UP.
Y'-KNOW...
...IF YOU EVER NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN AGAIN, I'LL BE HERE.
OOOH, HOW SUAVE!
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF LINES LIKE THAT MADE ME FALL FOR YOU?
わしゃ SKSH
わしゃ わしゃ SKSH
LIKE YOU'D EVER LET YOURSELF...
I'M JUST A KID TO YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT! HINA-SENSEI ISN'T INTERESTED IN LITTLE BOYS!
BUT...

...I MIGHT JUST...
...MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR NICE BOYS!
JUST KIDDING!
I...I WASN'T TRYING TO ACT COOL OR ANYTHING!
I JUST WANNA HELP IF—
DING キーン
DONG コーン
OH!
THERE'S THE BELL.
THANKS!
BUT, IT'S OKAY! I'M FINE!
...
IDIOT...

WHY CAN'T YOU...
...JUST GIVE UP?
HEY,
WANNA SHOOT SOME HOOPS AFTER THIS?
I'M IN!
UHH, SORRY... I'VE GOT PLANS.
WHAT PLANS?
JUST... CLASS REP WORK.
LUNCH BREAK IS SOME OF THE ONLY TIME I HAVE TO WRITE.

CREAK
キイ…
…
I KNEW IT.
SOMETHING DID HAPPEN, DIDN'T IT?
IT'S NOT GOOD TO BOTTLE THINGS UP LIKE THIS.
I WON'T TELL ANYONE OR–

FUJII-KUN...
OH, GOD ...
YOU SAW ME AT MY WORST...

SERIOUSLY... WHAT HAPPENED?
WAS IT SOMETHING A STUDENT SAID?
...
ACTUALLY...
...I SAW A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT AN OLD MAN AND HIS DOG ON TV LAST NIGHT.
IT WAS SOOO TOUCHING THAT I TEARED UP JUST THINKING ABOUT IT AGAIN.
THE DOG GOT SICK, AND...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL SUCH AN OBVIOUS LIE...
THERE WASN'T ANYTHING LIKE THAT ON TV YESTERDAY.
THEN LET'S SAY THE WASABI IN MY SOBA MADE MY EYES STING, AND...
THE HELL...?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
IT'S NOT THAT BIG OF A DEAL, REALLY.
IS IT SOMETHING...
...YOU CAN'T EVEN TALK TO YOUR BOYFRIEND ABOUT?

THEN I'M ALL THE MORE WILLING TO LISTEN!
I MIGHT NOT BE MUCH HELP IN TERMS OF ADVICE, BUT I CAN AT LEAST HEAR YOU OUT!
YOU CAN LEAVE OUT ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO SHARE,
IT'S JUST NOT HEALTHY TO BROOD LIKE THIS!
...
I'M NOT ASKING OUT OF CURIOSITY.
I REALLY AM JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU, SENSEI, SO–
THANKS.
THAT'S NICE OF YOU...
YOU'RE A NICE BOY, FUJII-KUN.
BUT...
...THERE ARE THINGS...
...ONLY ADULTS WOULD UNDERSTAND.

HA HA ... HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE ANYONE WAS THIS NICE TO ME?
WHOEVER BECOMES YOUR GIRLFRIEND WILL BE A LUCKY GIRL!
I'M JEAL–
QUIT TREATING ME LIKE A CHILD!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ONLY AN ADULT WOULD UNDERSTAND"?!
I'M NOT SOME CLUELESS KINDERGARTNER!
WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT BETWEEN YOU AND ME, SENSEI?!
WHEN I FOUND YOU DEPRESSED UP HERE A YEAR AGO...
...IT MADE ME THINK, "OOH, I GUESS TEACHERS ARE JUST PEOPLE, TOO."
AT THE SAME TIME...
...IT MADE ME WANT TO HELP YOU IN ANY WAY I CAN!
SO WHEN YOU TELL ME, "IT'S NOTHING," LOOKING LIKE THE WORLD'S GOING TO END...
TO BE HONEST, IT'S SUPER PAINFUL!
I MIGHT NOT LOOK DEPENDABLE TO YOU...
...BUT I'M DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS! TOTALLY DIFFERENT!
BECAUSE...

BE-CAUSE,
SEN-SEI,
I...

プルルルルルルッ
BRRRRR
プルルルルルッ
BRRRRR
...!
プルルルルルッ
BRRRRR
プルルルルルッ
BRRRRR
プルルルルルッ
BRRRR
プルルルルルッ
BRRRRR
プルルル
BRRR
CLINE
"I...

"...JUST CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE...
"...WHEN YOU LOOK SO WEAK"?
...NO.
NEVER-MIND...
ゴ RUB
ゴ RUB
SHE'S RIGHT.

THE REASON I LOST MY VIRGINITY ON AN IMPULSE TO HELP ME GIVE UP ON SENSEI...
...WAS PROBABLY BECAUSE I ALSO HOPED IT WOULD PUT ME ON EQUAL TERMS WITH HER AS AN ADULT.
BUT...
...EVEN AFTER DOING SO...
...I'M STILL JUST A KID.
1A
I'M HOME...
BEEP
OH, WELCOME HOME.
THE PHONE AGAIN?
WEREN'T YOU SWEATING THAT THE PHONE BILL WENT OVER 20,000* THE OTHER DAY?
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE IT A REST?
YE- YEAH...

*APPROX $200

ぽ
FWUMP
すっ
BAM
NAT-SU–
AH, GIVE ME A BREAK!

I- IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL THE REBELLIOUS AGE?
OH, SORRY...
REBELLING AGAINST YOU WOULDN'T HELP ME RELIEVE ANY STRESS.
SO? WHAT'S UP?
HUH? OH...
YOU SEE...
I WAS WONDERING WHEN I SHOULD TELL YOU...
...BUT THINGS STARTED MOVING SO QUICKLY.
I'M...
THINKING ABOUT GETTING MARRIED AGAIN.
...!
TALK ABOUT SUDDEN.
SO THAT'S WHO HE'S BEEN TALKING TO...
TEE HEE てへ♥
SORRY... I JUST COULDN'T FIND THE RIGHT TIME, YOU KNOW?

UHH...
WELL, GOOD FOR YOU, I GUESS?
ROLL ごろっ
IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE MOM DIED.
I FIGURED YOU'D REMARRY EVENTUALLY.
GO FOR IT.
G-GREAT!
SO YOU SEE,
SHE'S BRINGING HER CHILDREN OVER TO COME SAY HI. YOU SHOULD GET READY, TOO!
HUUUH?!
WHAT A PAIN...
DING DONG ピンポーン
THEY'RE HERE!
THMP どたっ
TMP
HEY...!
TMP
TMP
CLACK ガチャ
H-HEY THERE!
GOOD AFTERNOON.
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US OVER.

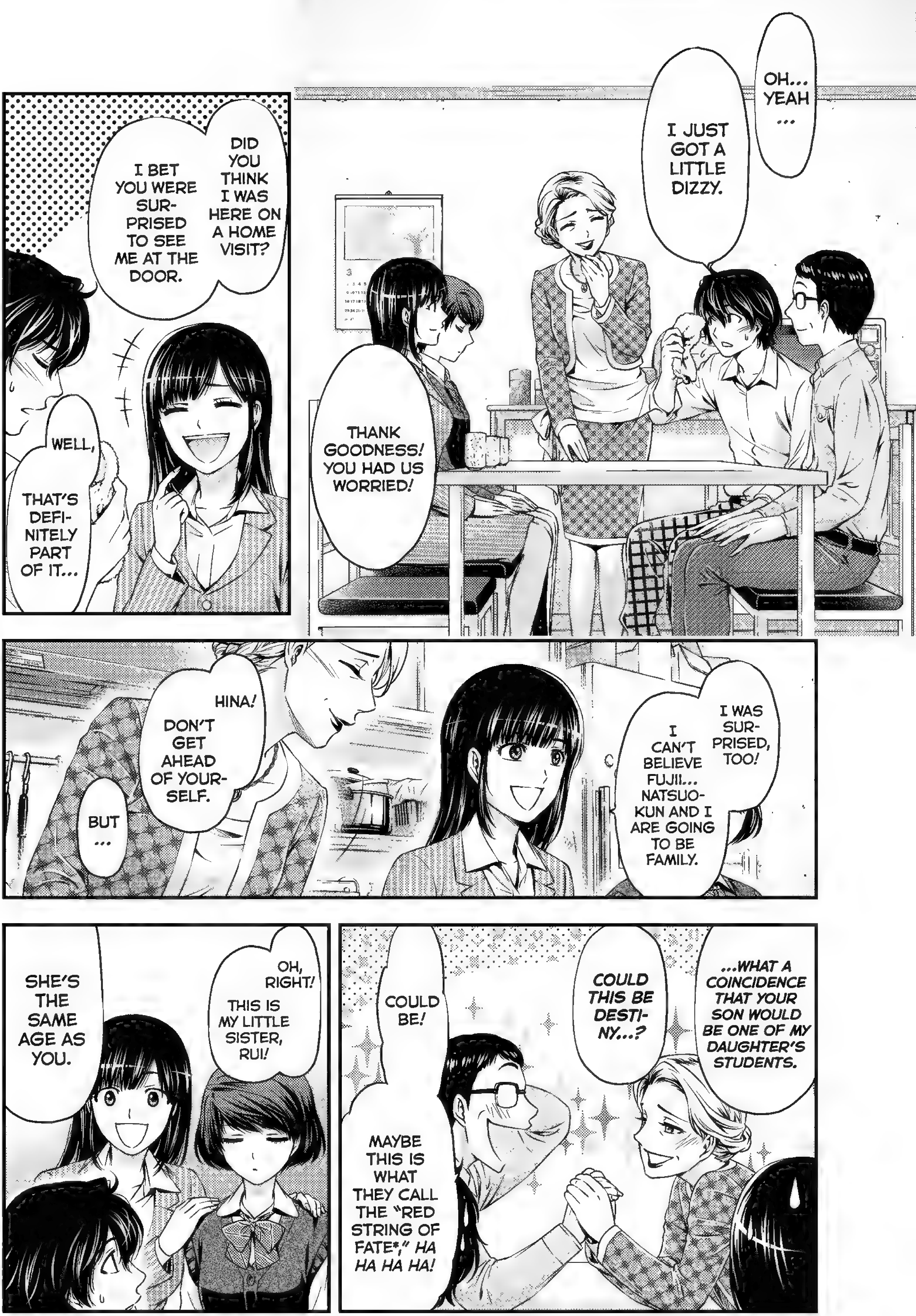
OH, MY. HOW REFINED.
PLEASE, COME ON IN!
GIRLS,
WHY WON'T YOU SAY HI, TOO?
!
HUH ...?
AH!
FUJII-KUN?!

CHAPTER 2: UNDER THE SAME ROOF?!

SE- SENSEI ...?
WHY ARE YOU ...?
NO WAY! OH, GOSH!
FUJII-SAN'S SON IS FUJII-KUN?!
WELL, OF COURSE HE IS, HINA.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN! HE'S ONE OF MY STUDENTS!
OH, MY! REALLY ?!
HUH?
IT'S A FAIRLY COMMON NAME, AFTER ALL.
I NEVER EXPECTED THEY'D BE RELATED!
HUH?

WHOA! WHOA! WHOA!
WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?!
SENSEI IS DAD'S NEW WIFE'S KID?
AND WHAT'S THAT GIRL DOING HERE?
WHA...?
HUH?!
NO GOOD. I'M GOING INTO FUDDLE* MODE...
STAGGER
N-NATSUO?!
OH, DEAR!
WHAT'S WRONG, FUJII-KUN?!
FUJII-KUN!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

*FUDDLE IS AN ABILITY FROM THE *DRAGON QUEST* VIDEO GAME SERIES WHICH PUTS ENEMIES INTO A CONFUSED STATE.


OH... YEAH...
I JUST GOT A LITTLE DIZZY.
THANK GOODNESS! YOU HAD US WORRIED!
DID YOU THINK I WAS HERE ON A HOME VISIT?
I BET YOU WERE SURPRISED TO SEE ME AT THE DOOR.
WELL, THAT'S DEFINITELY PART OF IT...
I WAS SURPRISED, TOO!
I CAN'T BELIEVE FUJII... NATSUO-KUN AND I ARE GOING TO BE FAMILY.
HINA! DON'T GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF.
BUT...
...WHAT A COINCIDENCE THAT YOUR SON WOULD BE ONE OF MY DAUGHTER'S STUDENTS.
COULD THIS BE DESTINY...?
COULD BE!
MAYBE THIS IS WHAT THEY CALL THE "RED STRING OF FATE*," HA HA HA HA!
OH, RIGHT! THIS IS MY LITTLE SISTER, RUI!
SHE'S THE SAME AGE AS YOU.

*THE RED STRING OF FATE IS A BELIEF ORIGINATING FROM CHINA THAT SUGGESTS THE GODS TIE AN INVISIBLE RED STRING AROUND THE ANKLES OF TWO PEOPLE DESTINED TO MEET EACH OTHER. IN JAPANESE CULTURE, THE RED STRING IS THOUGHT TO BE TIED AROUND THE LITTLE FINGER.

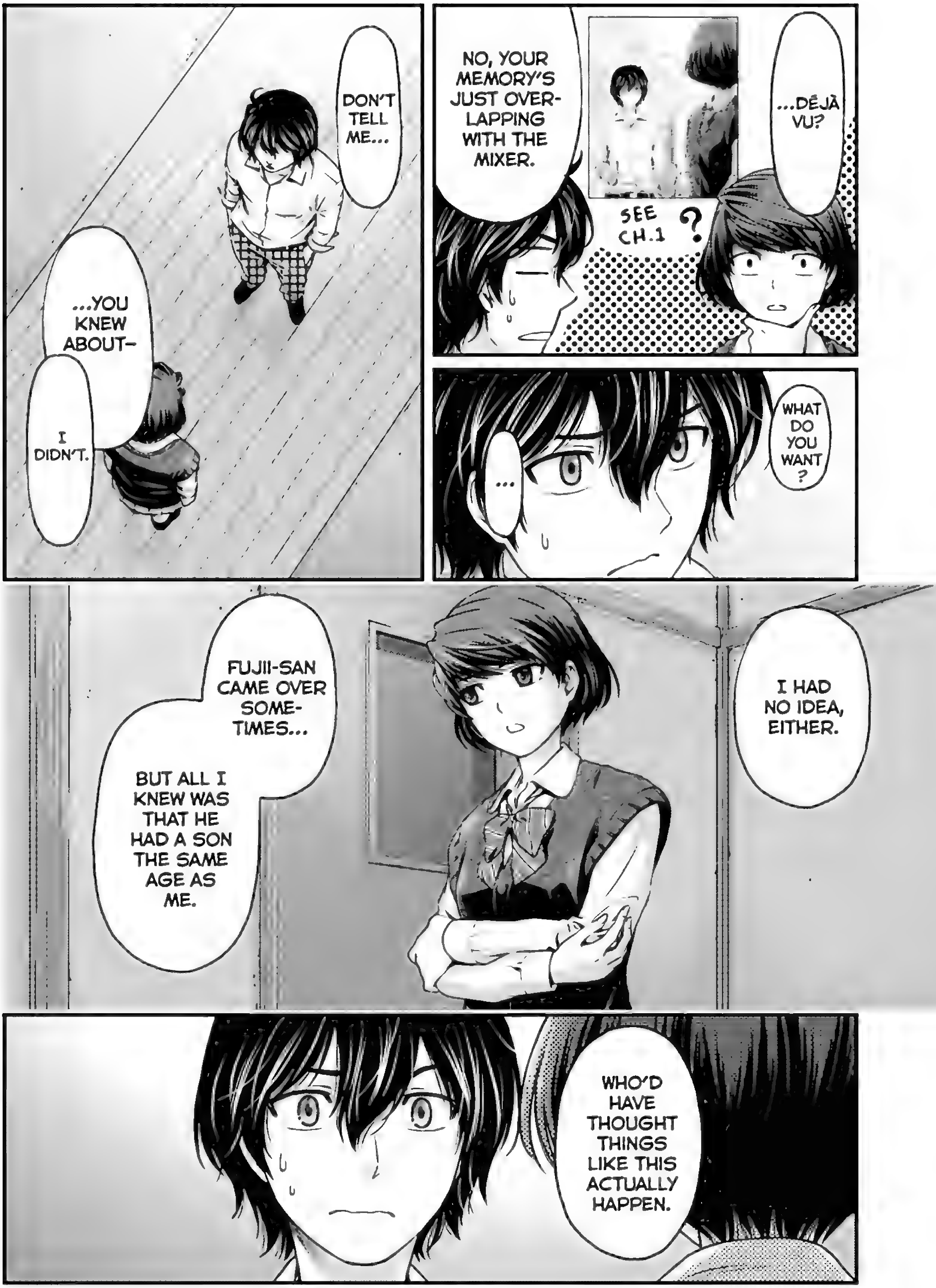
SHE CAN BE A LITTLE SHY, BUT...
TWITCH
ギクゥ!
HMM? DO YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?
UH, WELL...
ERR...
THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME MEETING.
A-HA. SO WE'RE GOING WITH THAT, HUH?
I SAID IT WAS A SECRET!
BADUM ドキ
BADUM ドキ
BADUM ドキ
RIGHT, WE DO LIVE PRETTY FAR AWAY, AFTER ALL.
THEN, IF I MAY...
MY NAME IS TSUKIKO TACHIBANA.
I'VE BEEN ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH YOUR FATHER.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO FINALLY MEET YOU.

LIKE-WISE...
I'M HIS SON, NATSUO...
...
UM... IF YOU DON'T MIND...
...MAY I ASK WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT MY FATHER?
WELL...
THERE ARE MANY THINGS I LIKE ABOUT HIM...
...BUT IF I HAD TO CHOOSE, IT WOULD BE HIS SINCERITY.
...
YOU SEE, MY EX-HUSBAND RAN OFF WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.
IT LEFT ME HATEFUL AND BITTER.
FOR YEARS, I THOUGHT I COULD NEVER TRUST MEN AGAIN.

BUT FUJII-SAN WAS DIFFERENT.
HE TOLD ME, "UNTIL THE ICE AROUND YOUR HEART MELTS...
"I'LL SUPPORT YOU TO THE VERY END!"
HIS WORDS WERE CLUMSY, BUT I COULD SENSE HIS EARNESTNESS.
AT THAT MOMENT... I KNEW HE WAS THE ONLY MAN FOR ME!
TSUKIKO-SAN...!
HE SAID SOMETHING SO CHEESY?!
HEY, NOW!
DON'T GO OFF TO YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD.
ぱ BREAK
O-OH, RIGHT!
SINCE YOU ALL WERE COMING OVER, I ORDERED SUSHI.
WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN US?

OOP!
THAT'S GOOD, THANKS.
MMM! THAT HITS THE SPOT!
YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO DRINK, HUH?
BEER IS BEST AFTER A LONG DAY OF WORK AND A BATH!
TOO BAD...
WE COULD DRINK TOGETHER IF YOU WERE A LITTLE OLDER!
...
EXCUSE ME, WHERE IS THE REST-ROOM?

OH! IT'S OUT THAT DOOR AND TO THE RIGHT.
ジャ
HISSS
CLACK
カチャ


...DÉJÀ VU?
SEE CH.1
?
NO, YOUR MEMORY'S JUST OVER-LAPPING WITH THE MIXER.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
...
DON'T TELL ME...
...YOU KNEW ABOUT–
I DIDN'T.
I HAD NO IDEA, EITHER.
FUJII-SAN CAME OVER SOME-TIMES...
BUT ALL I KNEW WAS THAT HE HAD A SON THE SAME AGE AS ME.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THINGS LIKE THIS ACTUALLY HAPPEN.

SO? WHAT DO WE DO?
HUH?
ABOUT THE MARRIAGE!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA AGREE TO THIS, ARE YOU?
I MEAN, WE—
I SUPPORT IT.
...HUH?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
MY MOTHER...
...ONLY HAD BAD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT MY FATHER EVER SINCE THEY SPLIT.
SHE HAD A HABIT OF TELLING US, "DON'T LET YOURSELVES BE FOOLED BY MEN LIKE YOUR FATHER!"
I HATED THAT SO MUCH.

BUT SHE COMPLETELY CHANGED AFTER SHE MET FUJII-SAN.
SHE STARTED TO DRESS UP MORE AND STOPPED TALKING BADLY ABOUT MY FATHER.
SHE'S ALWAYS SO FULL OF LIFE NOW.
THAT'S WHY, I DON'T WANT...
...TO TAKE AWAY HER HAPPINESS FOR MY OWN SELFISH REASONS.
IT'S NOT LIKE I COULD GUARANTEE HER A HAPPY LIFE EVEN IF I WAS AGAINST IT, ANYWAY.
...
WELL...
...YOU'RE FREE TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, THOUGH.

PHEW... SOME NIGHT, HUH?
OH,
JUST LEAVE THE DISHES THERE. I'LL DO THEM.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT HER DAUGHTER WOULD BE YOUR TEACHER?
BUT I'M GLAD IT HELPED EVERYONE OPEN UP QUICKER.

I DON'T WANT...
...TO TAKE AWAY HER HAPPINESS FOR MY OWN SELFISH REASONS.
HEY, DAD...
IT'S FINE...
...IF YOU WANT TO REMARRY.

…
NAT-SUO…
I DON'T MEAN THAT LIKE I DON'T CARE…
…I JUST WISH YOU'D HAVE TOLD ME SOONER.
YOU'VE WORKED HARD ALL BY YOURSELF UNTIL NOW, AFTER ALL.
ギゅっ…
SQUEEZE
THANK YOU.
AND I'M SORRY.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK…
…I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.

...
I KNOW.
SO ...!
RUSTLE RUSTLE
IT'S A LITTLE EARLY, BUT I DECIDED TO BUY A HOUSE FOR ALL OF US TO LIVE IN!
WE'RE MOVING IN NEXT WEEK!
中古一戸建て住宅
WHY IS EVERY PART OF THIS SO SUDDEN?!
WHAT?!

THE GIRL YOU LOST YOUR VIRGINITY TO AND YOUR TEACHER...
...ARE GOING TO BE YOUR STEP-SISTERS?!
...
...
SORRY, I DON'T FOLLOW.
YEAH, I DON'T BLAME YOU.
JUST... WHEN I SAW HOW EXCITED MY DAD WAS, I JUST COULDN'T SAY NO.
SO, WHAT NOW? ARE YOU GONNA LIVE TOGETHER?
YEAH... DAD SAID HE BOUGHT A HOUSE,
AND WE'RE ALL GONNA MOVE IN TOGETHER.
RATTLE
ガラッ
OH, MY LORD!

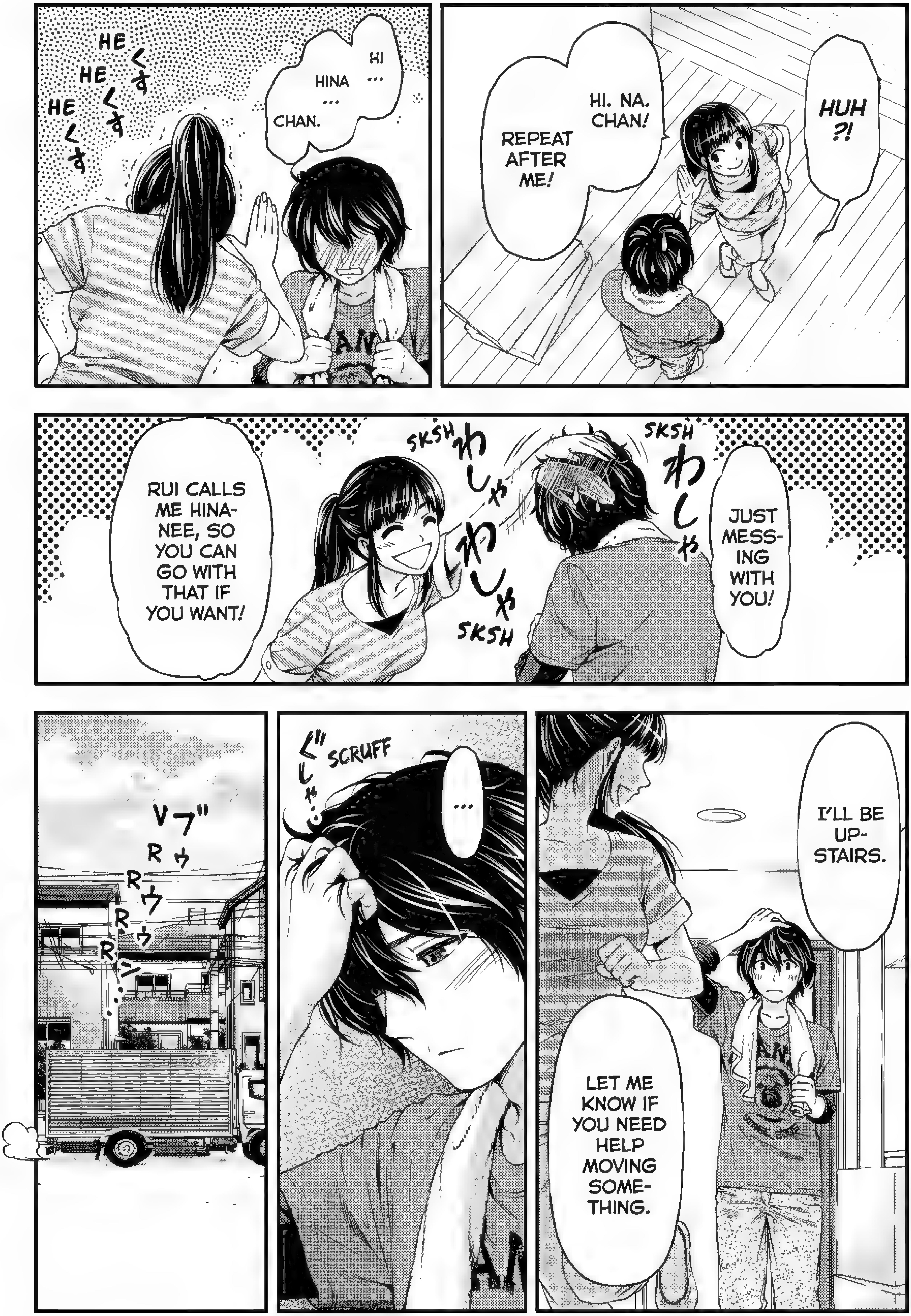
YOU'RE MOVING AWAY, NATSUO-CHAN?! WHERE TO?!
WE'LL STILL BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
THANK GOODNESS! BUT OH, HOW SAD!
NOW WE'LL SEE YOU EVEN LESS!
COME ON!
NATSUO-CHAN IS LIKE FAMILY!
WELL ...
IT SOUNDS LIKE THINGS HAVE GOTTEN COMPLICATED, BUT IF YOU AGREED TO IT, THEN I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
I HAVE JUST ONE THING TO ASK AS YOUR FRIEND.
INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL OLDER SISTER, WILL YA?
LIKES OLDER WOMEN.
HEY!
THAT'S MY CRUSH YOU'RE TRYING TO STEAL ...!
BUT YOU'RE GONNA BE SIBLINGS, RIGHT?!

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE DONE FOR GOOD THIS TIME?!
...
NOT TO MENTION THE WHOLE STUDENT-TEACHER OBSTACLE...
...I REALLY DO HAVE TO GIVE UP...
DON'T I?
I GUESS...
...
WELL,
I CAN UNDERSTAND THE TABOO PART OF IT BEING MORE EXCITING...
...BUT I THINK YOU'RE OUTTA LUCK THIS TIME.

DON'T MIND ME...
HUH...
THIS PLACE IS PRETTY NICE.
RIGHT?
IT'S A LITTLE FAR FROM THE STATION, BUT IT WAS A BARGAIN.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S UNLOAD THE TRUCK SO I CAN RETURN IT TO THE RENTAL PLACE.
EASY...
TMP TMP
たたたっ
ぽ
PAT
んっ

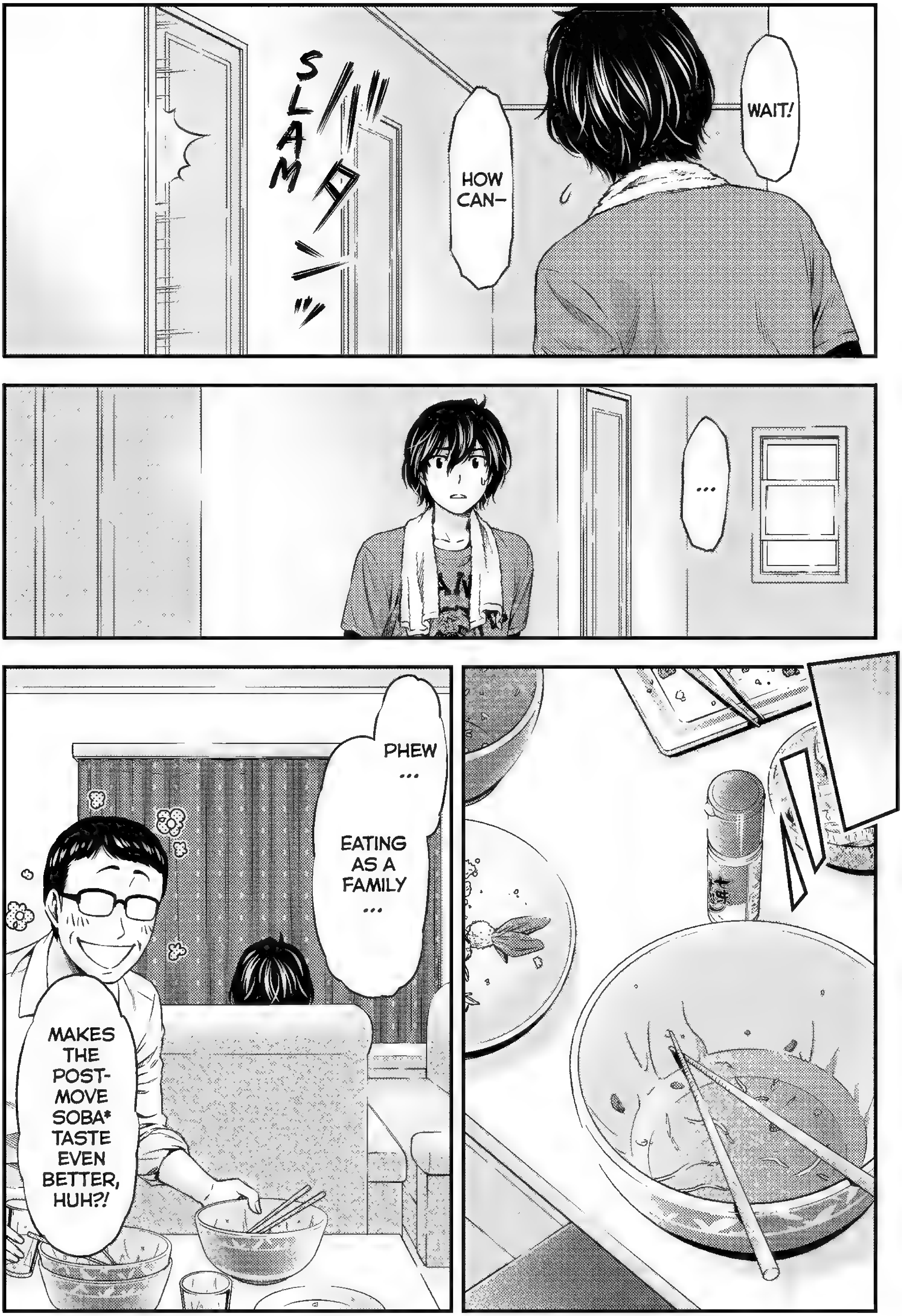
GOOD WORK.
OH, YOU WERE ALREADY HERE?
UH-HUH.
I ALREADY CARRIED MY STUFF TO MY ROOM.
GUESS WE'RE LIVING UNDER THE SAME ROOF FROM NOW ON.
FEELS KINDA STRANGE, HUH?
YEAH...
I'M SO EXCITED TO HAVE A LITTLE BROTHER NOW!
MAYBE I'LL GO DIGGING FOR NAUGHTY THINGS IN YOUR ROOM.
PLEASE DON'T!
AND ONE MORE THING.
SWIF

WE'RE GOING TO BE SIBLINGS...
...SO LET'S DROP THE FORMALITY AT HOME, OKAY?
Y-YES...
ERR, SURE...
GREAT!
THEN THERE'S NAMES.
YOU'RE FINE WITH NATSUO-KUN, RIGHT?
AS FOR ME...
HMM...
HOW ABOUT...
...YOU CALL ME HINA-CHAN?


HUH?!
HI. NA. CHAN!
REPEAT AFTER ME!
HI... HINA... CHAN.
HE くす HE くす HE くす
SKSH わしゃ SKSH わしゃ SKSH わしゃ
JUST MESSING WITH YOU!
RUI CALLS ME HINA-NEE, SO YOU CAN GO WITH THAT IF YOU WANT!
I'LL BE UP-STAIRS.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED HELP MOVING SOME-THING.
SCRUFF ぐしゃ…
…
V ブ" R ゥ R ウ R ゥ R ン…

THUD ドス
PHEW... STAIRS ARE KILLER.
I'M GONNA BE SORE TOMORROW.
UHH...
WHICH ROOM WAS MINE AGAIN?
LET'S SEE...
CLACK ガチャ

TMP
つか
TMP
つか
つか
TMP
YANK
ACK!
YOU CAN JUST FORGET…
…ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
…!
NOTHING HAPPENED BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.
UNDERSTAND?
IF YOU DO…
…THEN DON'T ACT SO WEIRD AROUND ME.


WAIT!
HOW CAN—
SLAM
タンッ
...
PHEW...
EATING AS A FAMILY...
MAKES THE POST-MOVE SOBA* TASTE EVEN BETTER, HUH?!

---

*A COMMON CUSTOM IN JAPAN IS TO EAT SOBA AFTER A MOVE.

UHH... YEAH...
I DIDN'T HAVE THE LUXURY TO ENJOY THE TASTE.
LET ME HELP YOU CLEAN UP!
OH, RUI. YOUR SISTER'S TAKING A BATH, SO YOU SHOULD GO NEXT.
OKAY.
ARE THERE TOWELS LAID OUT?
YES, I PUT THEM BY THE SINK.
PEEK
ちらっ
THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL...
...I CAN PRETEND THAT NOTHING HAPPENED!
AHHH... I NEEDED THAT!

THAT FELT GREAT!
THE BATHROOM IS HUGE.
AND THE TUB IS BIGGER THAN OUR OLD APART–
EEEEK!
FLAP
WHOA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! WE HAVE MEN AROUND NOW!
S-SORRY... FORCE OF HABIT...

...
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LIVE IN AN ALL-FEMALE HOUSEHOLD TOO LONG.
I'M SORRY SHE'S SO SLOVENLY...
IT'S NO PROBLEM.
CLACK
カチャ
SORRY ABOUT THAT!
THIS SHOULD DO, RIGHT?
I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL FROM NOW ON.
WELL THAT'S JUST AS STIMULATING IN ITS OWN WAY.
BE CALM, MY SON...
NOOOW THEN.
BEER TIME!
PEEK
ちらっ
A-HA!

WITH JUST THIS~
THE GOOD TIMES NEVER END~
ぼ
PHEEEW!
すっ
POMF
GLUG
ごっ
GLUG ごっ
ごっ
GLUG
AHHH... A DROP OF BEER IS WORTH A DROP OF BLOOD!
THAT'S SOMETHING A DRUNK WOULD SAY...
WELL, IT'S TRUE!
I WONDER IF THERE'S ANYTHING GOOD ON TV.
OH!
DOBU-ROKKU'S* ON!

*A COMEDIAN DUO CONSISTING OF MEMBERS SHINTARO MORI AND NAOTO EGUCHI. THE DUO'S NAME IS A SELF-DEPRICATING FUSION OF "A MAN LIKE UNREFINED SAKE (MORI)," AND "A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING (EGUCHI)." THE LATTER HALF OF THE GROUP'S NAME IS ALSO A PUN ON THEIR COMEDIC STYLE, WHICH CONSISTS LARGELY OF HUMOROUS SONGWRITING.

I LOVE THESE GUYS!
THIS IS GONNA DRIVE ME NUTS...
NAT-SUO.
WE'RE TURNING IN FOR THE NIGHT.
OH...
YOU'VE GOT SCHOOL TOMORROW, SO DON'T STAY UP TOO LATE, OKAY?
GOOD NIGHT.
NIGHT...
AND...

...WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT THIS?!
zzz
すー

SEN—
I MEAN ...
H-HINA-NEE ...
HINA-NEE!
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD IF YOU DON'T SLEEP IN BED.
STANCE SINCE BO...
HINA-NEE!
MMF ...
C'MON, GET UP.
HINA-NEE...
...
H-
HINA ...
CHAN ...

SNAP
JUMP
THAT'S ME!
OHH? HEY, NATSUO-KUN...
HAVE YOU COME TO PICK ME UP?
YEAH, YEAH. THAT'S RIGHT.
NOW GET UP! YOU HAVE TO GO SLEEP IN YOUR ROOM.
BUUUT...
...I DUN WANNA!
NO BUTS!
NAA-KUN!
NAA-KUN?
Y-
YES, MA'AM!
THOUGH I HAVE MY SHORTCOMINGS...

...I'LL DO MY VERY BEST...
TO BE A GOOD BIG SISTER TO YOU.
I HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG ...
THAS-SIT!
POMF ぼ
ふっ
AH...
STANCE
SINCE 2006
ZZZ
ス―
ス―……
...

I UNDERSTAND.
I REALLY DO...
...BUT...
STANCE

JUST ONCE...
JUST ONCE, AND NEVER AGAIN.

I'LL END IT ALL WITH THIS...

カチャ
CLACK
FWIP
バッ
バッ

WHAT ...
WERE YOU DOING JUST NOW?

CHAPTER 3: UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE

WHAT ...
WERE YOU DOING JUST NOW?
ゴク…
GULP
N-

NOTHING...
...
HMM.
コト TAK
...
DID SHE JUST BARELY MISS IT?
つか TMP
つか TMP
つか TMP

KICK
!
THUD
...
OWW...
HINA-NEE.
TIME FOR BED.
UM... MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE A LITTLE MORE GENTLE?
SHE HIT HER HEAD PRETTY HARD...
IT'S FINE. THIS IS HOW I USUALLY DO THINGS.
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
BUH-BYE! G'NIGHT, NAA-KUN!
G-GOOD NIGHT...
WELL...

...IT'S PARTIALLY HINA-NEE'S FAULT...
...FOR LETTING HER GUARD DOWN LIKE THIS.
...!
バタン
SHUT
BUST-ED...
うーーん
URRRGH
うーーん…
URRRGH
I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU.

ANY GIRL WILL DO FOR YOU, HUH?
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SUCH A HORN DOG.
DOOOOOM
AHH!
RUI TOLD ME...
...YOU TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME IN MY SLEEP.
W-WAIT!
I WASN'T TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU!
I JUST— THAT IS TO SAY...
NO EXCUSES!
HOW SHAMELESS!
WE CAN'T EVEN BATHE IN PEACE WITH SOMEONE LIKE HIM IN THE HOUSE!
FLAP
SORRY...
...BUT WE CAN'T LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE AS YOU!

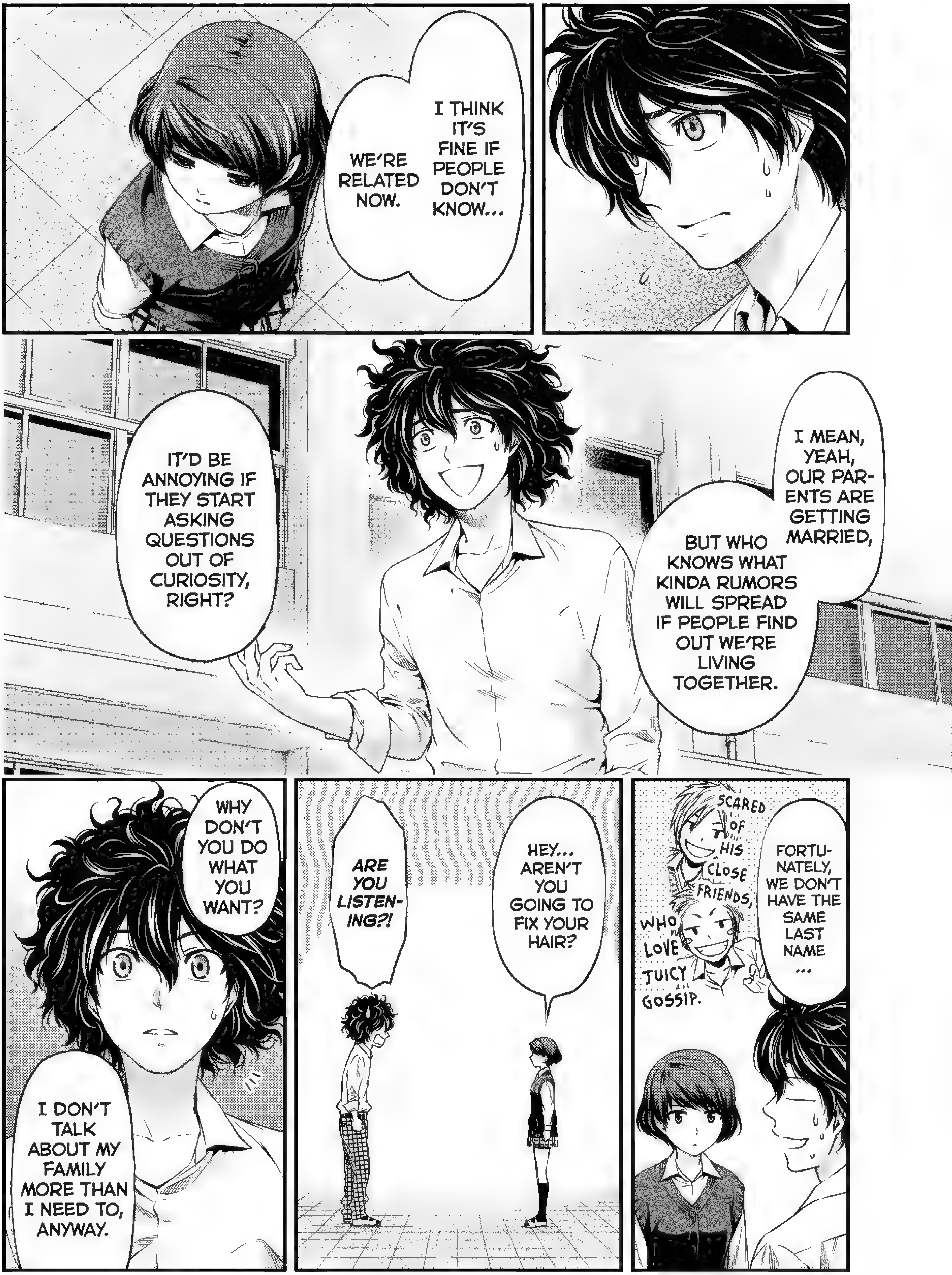
THE TWO OF US ARE MOVING OUT.
GOOD-BYE, NATSUO-KUN.
HUH?! WAIT!
WAAAAIT!
SNAP
チュン CHIRP
チュン CHIRP
チチチ CHIRRRP...
JUST A DREAM...
IT WAS PRETTY REALISTIC, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED...
バターン KATHUNK
MAYBE I SHOULD CALL IT A PROPHETIC DREAM...
?
KATHUNK?

ERGH ...!
SD
08:12
4-28 (MON.)
WHY DIDN'T ANYONE WAKE ME UP?!
YO.
RARE TO SEE YOU SHOW UP LATE.
ALSO ...
...THAT'S SOME CRAZY BEDHEAD, MAN.
I WAS LATE AS IT IS...

HEY, GUYS!
HOW DILIGENT. I CAN'T COME TO SCHOOL UNTIL I SET MY HAIR.
KUWANO OVER IN CLASS 2 SENT ME A LINE MESSAGE DURING HOMEROOM.
HE SAYS THEY GOT A TRANSFER STUDENT!
WHO'S THIS?
FOR REAL? IS IT A DUDE OR A CHICK?
CHICK!
SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S PRETTY GOOD LOOKING, TOO.
I GOTTA SEE THIS!
HEY! FIRST PERIOD'S ABOUT TO START!
WE'RE JUST GONNA SNEAK A PEEK!
WHOA! WHAT'S WITH THAT CROWD?
HUH...?
ISN'T SHE...?

TAP
つか
TAP
つか
TAP
つか
OOP!
じっ
STARE
NICE BEDHEAD.
SHUT UP. DID YOU WALK OVER HERE JUST TO SAY THAT?
I TAKE IT YOU FORGOT TO BRING LUNCH, TOO, RIGHT?
MOM LEFT IT ON THE COUN—
SLAP
...
C-CAN WE TALK DURING BREAK?

I HAD NO IDEA YOU TRANSFERRED HERE.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
I DIDN'T WANT A LONG COMMUTE TO SCHOOL, SO I TOOK THE TRANSFER TEST.
FIRST I'M HEARING IT.
...
SO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT US?
HUH?
OUR RELATIONSHIP!
DO WE TELL EVERYONE OR WHAT?
RELATIONSHIP?
YOU MEAN HOW WE HAD SEX ONCE AND THEN JUST HAPPENED TO BECOME STEP-SIBLINGS?
NO, I'M PRETTY SURE WE SHOULD KEEP THAT PART TOP SECRET.


WE'RE RELATED NOW. I THINK IT'S FINE IF PEOPLE DON'T KNOW...
I MEAN, YEAH, OUR PARENTS ARE GETTING MARRIED,
BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT KINDA RUMORS WILL SPREAD IF PEOPLE FIND OUT WE'RE LIVING TOGETHER.
IT'D BE ANNOYING IF THEY START ASKING QUESTIONS OUT OF CURIOSITY, RIGHT?
FORTUNATELY, WE DON'T HAVE THE SAME LAST NAME...
SCARED OF HIS CLOSE FRIENDS, WHO LOVE JUICY GOSSIP.
HEY... AREN'T YOU GOING TO FIX YOUR HAIR?
ARE YOU LISTENING?!
WHY DON'T YOU DO WHAT YOU WANT?
I DON'T TALK ABOUT MY FAMILY MORE THAN I NEED TO, ANYWAY.

IN SHORT, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, "DON'T TALK TO ME AT SCHOOL," RIGHT?
GOT IT.
Y-YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY IT LIKE THAT!
BUT THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.
I WASN'T REALLY PLANNING TO DEPEND ON YOU, ANYWAY.
2-5
NATSUO-KUUUN!
CAN YOU SPAAARE A MINUTE?
THERE'S SOMETHIN' WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOOOU.

I COULD'VE SWORN YOU SAID NOTHING HAPPENED AFTER YOU SNUCK OUT OF THE MIXER LAST TIME.
GRRR
AGH!
TICKLE こちょ
TICKLE こちょ
YET YOU TWO SEEMED AWFULLY CLOSE JUST NOW, BOSS.
WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?
AH HA! AH HA HA!
REALLY.
IT'S NOTHING.
IT SOUNDS LIKE...
SHE DOESN'T CARE, EITHER.
I'M GONNA HIT THE BATHROOM.
DUMP?
SURE, I'M GONNA TAKE A DUMP...

THE HELL, MAN?
I'M THE BAD GUY NOW? SHIT...
TAP タ TAP タッ
RUFFLE
しゃ
OH, GOSH!
WHAT'S WITH YOUR HAIR?!
S-SENSEI...
I'M SURPRISED YOU KNEW IT WAS ME.
AH!
DON'T TELL ME YOU WERE LATE TO SCHOOL THIS MORNING!
I WAS WORRIED WHEN I LEFT HOME.
I ASKED RUI TO WAKE YOU UP...
ZZZ
WAKE UP.
...BUT SHE'LL BARELY SAY TWO WORDS BEFORE GIVING UP.
DAMN HER!

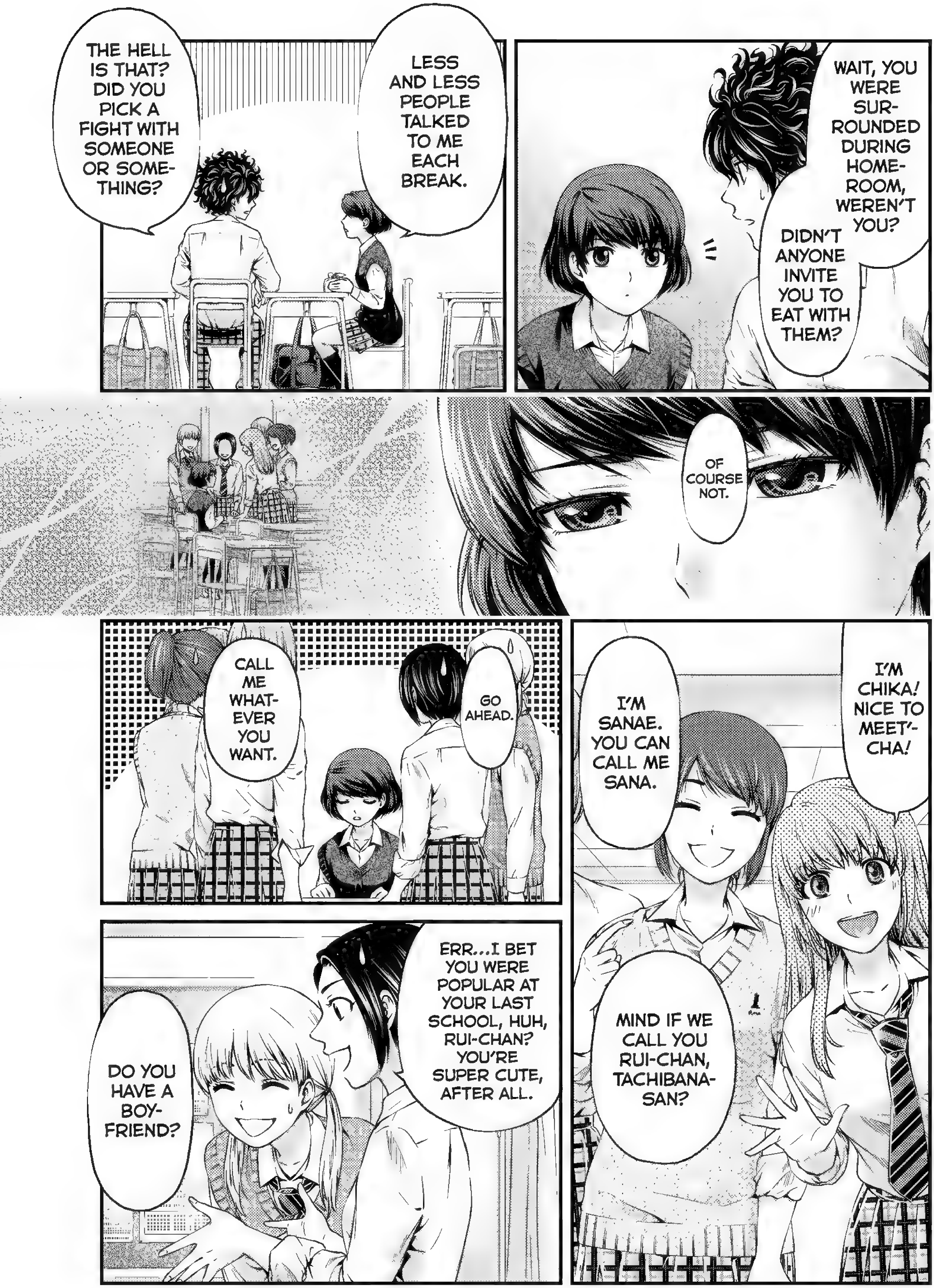
I'VE BEEN GETTING SHIT FOR IT ALL MORNING, SO I'M TRYING TO FIX IT...
...BUT IT JUST WON'T COOPERATE.
ふ FLUFF
AWW.
I THINK IT'S FINE LIKE THIS.
わ
IT'S SO FLUFFY AND CUTE.
...
ふわ FLUFF!
ふわ FLUFF!
THERE SHE GOES TREATING ME LIKE A KID AGAIN...
UMM, BY THE WAY...
ABOUT SCHOOL...
HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE WE'RE STEP-SIBLINGS YET?
HUH? NOPE.
OH, GOOD.
IT'S JUST... PERSONALLY I THINK IT MIGHT BE BEST IF WE'RE NOT TOO OPEN ABOUT IT.
OHH, GOOD POINT.
I WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE TO THINK I'M LEAKING YOU TEST ANSWERS OR ANYTHING.
SURE THING.

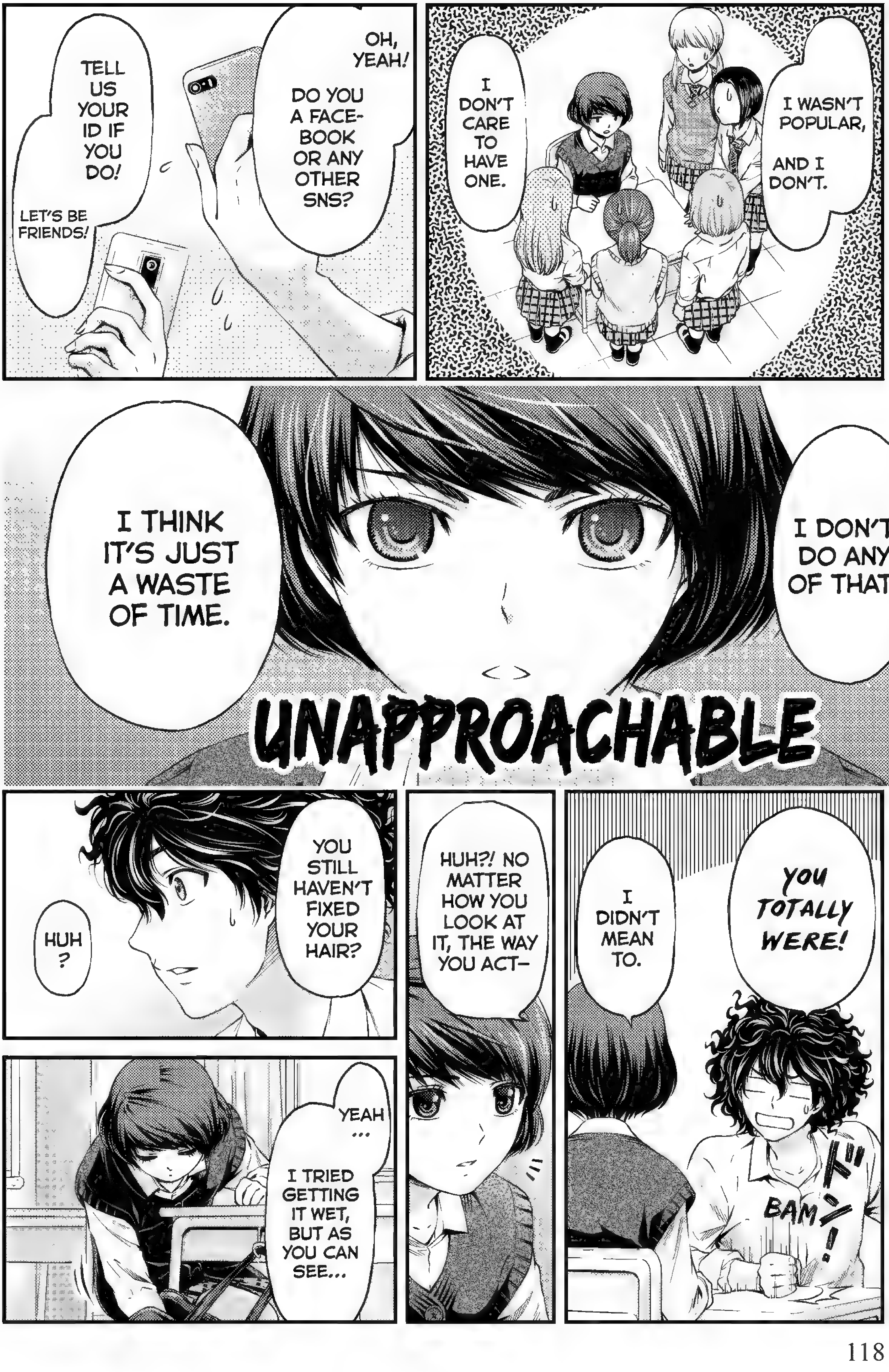
UMM... YOU'RE NOT OF-FENDED?
ME? NOT AT ALL.
THAT'S GOOD, THEN.
ONE MORE THING.
DO YOU...
...REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT LAST NIGHT, SENSEI?
OH, GOD! DON'T TELL ME WE...!
HUH?!
HUH?!
WH-
WHAT...?
LIKE...
...WE DIDN'T...
...KISS, DID WE?
ERR...
THAT'S,
UHH...
DID WE?!
N-
NO, NO, NO, NO!
I TRIED, THOUGH!
WE DIDN'T?!

THANK GOD!
APPARENTLY I KISSED ONE OF MY GIRLFRIENDS WHEN I GOT DRUNK ONCE.
I WAS WORRIED I DID IT AGAIN.
O-OH, I SEE...
BADUM ドキ BADUM ドキ BADUM ドキ BADUM ドキ BADUM ドキ
I HAVE A HABIT OF CUTTING LOOSE TOO MUCH WHEN I'M AT HOME.
THAT'S NO GOOD.
I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL, BUT SORRY IF I EVER TROUBLE YOU AGAIN!
TRY TO BE UNDERSTANDING WHEN THAT HAPPENS!
HONESTLY, I'M COOL IF YOU WANNA CUT LOOSE ALL THE TIME...
キーンコーン
DING DONG

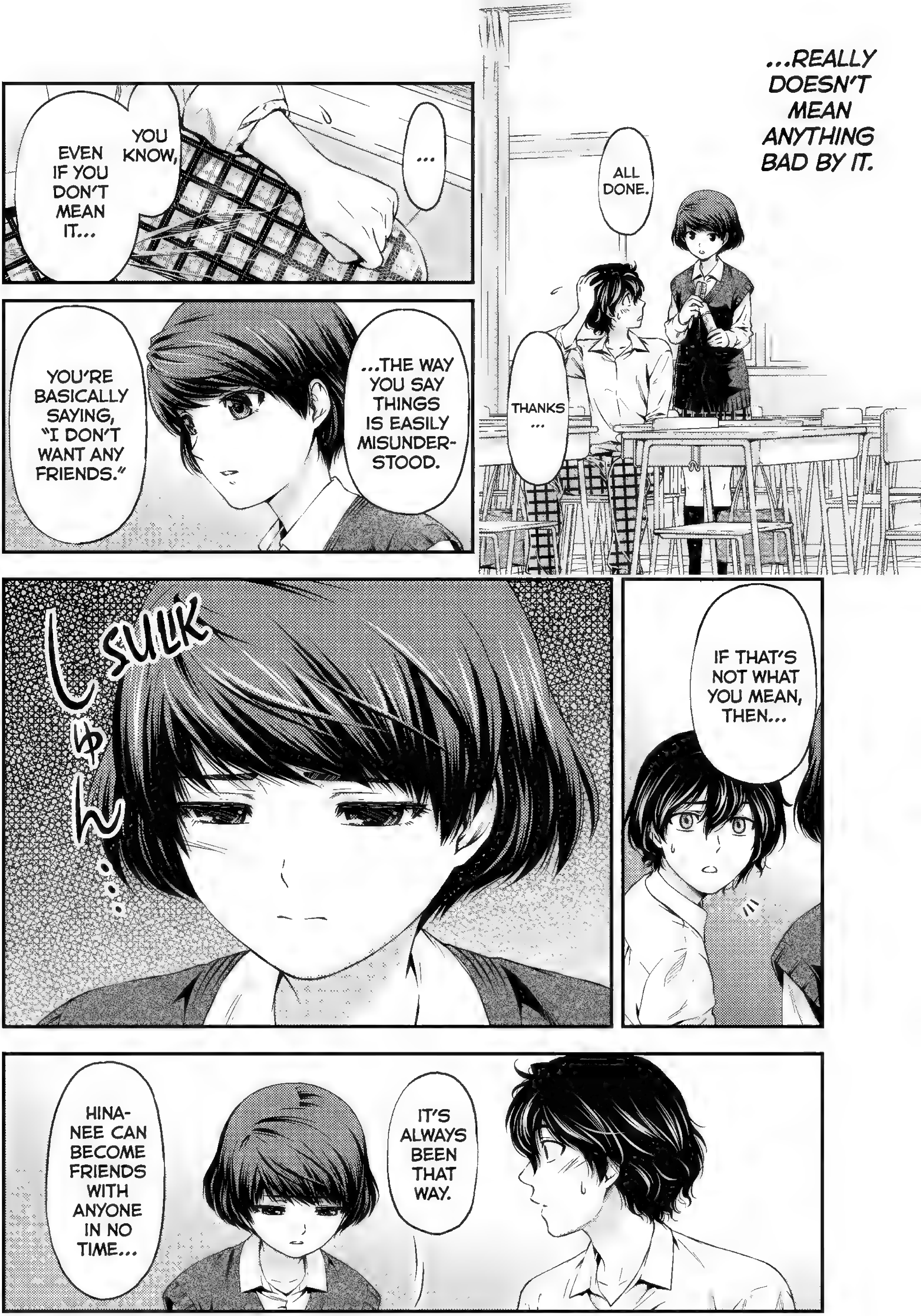
...
WHAT'S UP, NATSUO?
IT...
IT'S NOTHING.

YOU EAT LUNCH ALONE?
IS THAT A PROB-LEM?
I MEAN, NO, BUT ...
WHAT?
WEREN'T WE GOING TO ACT LIKE STRANG-ERS?
WHAT I MEANT ...
...IS THAT IT'S OKAY TO BE "FRIENDS!" WE DON'T HAVE TO ACT LIKE STRANGERS!


WAIT, YOU WERE SURROUNDED DURING HOMEROOM, WEREN'T YOU?
DIDN'T ANYONE INVITE YOU TO EAT WITH THEM?
LESS AND LESS PEOPLE TALKED TO ME EACH BREAK.
THE HELL IS THAT? DID YOU PICK A FIGHT WITH SOMEONE OR SOMETHING?
OF COURSE NOT.
I'M CHIKA! NICE TO MEET'CHA!
I'M SANAE. YOU CAN CALL ME SANA.
MIND IF WE CALL YOU RUI-CHAN, TACHIBANA-SAN?
GO AHEAD.
CALL ME WHATEVER YOU WANT.
ERR...I BET YOU WERE POPULAR AT YOUR LAST SCHOOL, HUH, RUI-CHAN? YOU'RE SUPER CUTE, AFTER ALL.
DO YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?


I WASN'T POPULAR, AND I DON'T.
I DON'T CARE TO HAVE ONE.
OH, YEAH! DO YOU A FACEBOOK OR ANY OTHER SNS?
TELL US YOUR ID IF YOU DO!
LET'S BE FRIENDS!
I DON'T DO ANY OF THAT.
I THINK IT'S JUST A WASTE OF TIME.
UNAPPROACHABLE
YOU TOTALLY WERE!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO.
ド
BAM!
HUH?! NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THE WAY YOU ACT—
YOU STILL HAVEN'T FIXED YOUR HAIR?
HUH?
YEAH... I TRIED GETTING IT WET, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE...

TURN AROUND.
?
I'LL FIX IT FOR YOU.
O- OKAY...
I KNEW IT.
YOUR HAIR'S TOTALLY TANGLED.
WATER WON'T DO ANYTHING FOR THIS.
...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO.
NOT REALLY.
OH...
I SEE.
THIS IS HOW I ALWAYS AM.
THAT'S RIGHT.
SHE...


...REALLY DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING BAD BY IT.
ALL DONE.
THANKS...
...
YOU KNOW,
EVEN IF YOU DON'T MEAN IT...
...THE WAY YOU SAY THINGS IS EASILY MISUNDERSTOOD.
YOU'RE BASICALLY SAYING, "I DON'T WANT ANY FRIENDS."
IF THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU MEAN, THEN...
しゅん...
SULK
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY.
HINA-NEE CAN BECOME FRIENDS WITH ANYONE IN NO TIME...

...BUT IF I TRY THE SAME THING...
WOW! YOU LIKE THAT IDOL GROUP?
WHO'S YOUR FAVOR-ITE?
...IT NEVER SEEMS TO GO RIGHT.
WOW... YOU LIKE THAT IDOL GROUP?
WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THEM?
IT'S *HOW* YOU SAY THINGS!
くぅっ
ARGH
SHEESH...
I FEEL BAD FOR YOU...
...SO I'M GONNA GIVE YOU SPECIAL TRAINING PERSONALLY.
...
HUH?
KNOCK IT OFF WITH THE "HUHS!"
TRY TO SOUND A LITTLE MORE GIRLY!

IN OTHER WORDS, WE'LL WORK ON HOW TO ANSWER PEOPLE.
I'LL SPEAK TO YOU LIKE ONE OF YOUR GIRL CLASSMATES. YOU ANSWER.
IF IT'S NO GOOD, I'LL CRITIQUE YOU.
ALL RIGHT?
COUGH
ゴホン
HERE WE GO.
HEY, RUI-CHAAAN!
WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO ON DAYS OFF?
... AI HARUNA!*
IT'S NOT A QUIZ SHOW! PRETEND WE'RE FRIENDS!
DAYS OFF? I SUPPOSE I READ A LOT...
REALLY?! WHAT KIND OF BOOKS?

*A JAPANESE TRANSGENDER TV PERSONALITY AND SINGER.

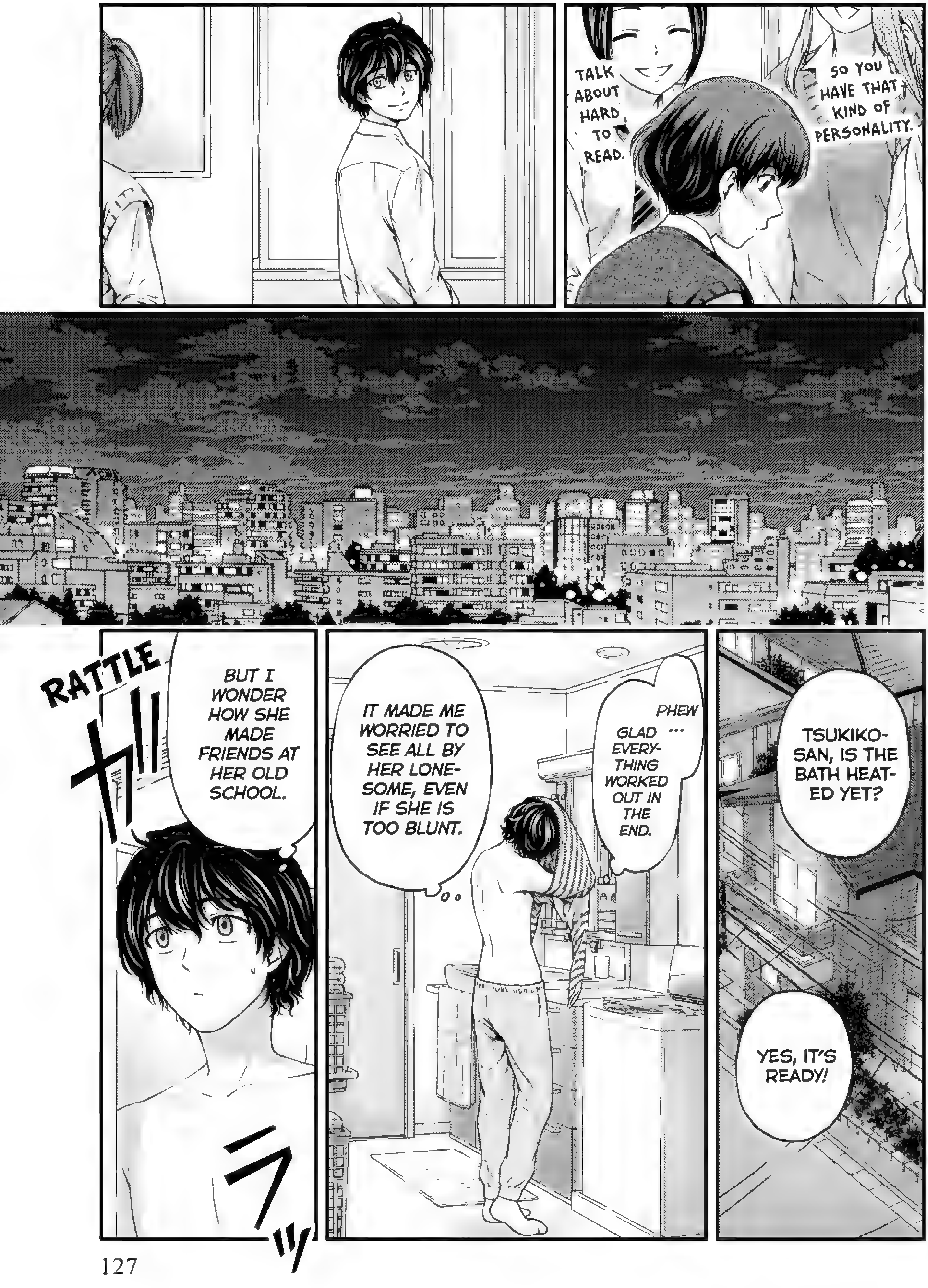
YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T KNOW ANY OF THEM.
DON'T JUST CUT THE CONVERSATION OFF! YOU HAVE TO KEEP IT GOING!
I LIKE SMOKE, SOIL, OR SACRIFICES BY OTARO MAIJO.
VIOLENT SUSPENSE, HUH...?
I KNOW IT, BUT...
I'M HAVING A HARD TIME REACTING LIKE A GIRL, BUT WHATEVER...
ANYWAY, LET'S PLAY CONVERSATIONAL CATCH WITH SMILES NOW!
OH, REALLY? I READ A LOT OF HARUKI MURAKAMI'S WORK!
OH...
YOU MEAN LIKE THAT PRETENTIOUS ARTSY NOVEL ABOUT THE EGGHEAD NORMIE WHO BROODS ABOUT LOVE AND...
DON'T DISS PEOPLE'S TASTES WITH A SMILE ON YOUR FACE!
THAT'S A CLASSIC!
TELL ME,
ARE YOU EVEN TRYING TO GET ME TO LIKE YOU WITH HOW YOU TALK?

I'M JUST SPEAKING HONESTLY.
NO ONE'S SAYING YOU HAVE TO BE DISHONEST!
JUST BE CONSIDERATE!
YOU GOTTA TALK IN A WAY THAT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL GOOD!
FROWN
YOU SOUND LIKE A PATRON AT A HOSTESS CLUB.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU CALLING A CLUB PATRON?! I'M SAYING THIS FOR *YOUR* SAKE!
THESE ARE THE BASICS OF CONVERSATION!
AND FIRST OF ALL, I WOULDN'T GIVE A SINGLE YEN TO A HOSTESS LIKE YOU!
THEN I'LL HAVE THE SUITS BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF YOU.
WHA?!
THAT'S DIRTY!
THEN PAY YOUR TAB.
100,000 YEN*, PLEASE.
100,000 FOR TALKING TO YOU?! THAT'S BEYOND A RIPOFF!
DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH OUR CLUB?
EXCUSE MEEE! GUAAARDS!
DON'T CALL THEM!

*APPROX. $1,000

WHAT THE HELL ARE WE TALKING ABOUT, ANYWAY?!
WE STARTED THIS TO HELP YOU MAKE FRIENDS, NOT-
CLUNK
LAUGHTER
......
HUH ...?
OH, JEEZ. YOU'RE ACTUALLY PRETTY UPBEAT, TACHIBANA-SAN!
WHAT WAS THAT SKIT JUST NOW? "THE HOSTESS AND THE PATRON?" THAT'S HILARIOUS!

WHAT ARE YOU PRACTICING?
OH, UHH ...
SHE WANTS TO MAKE FRIENDS, SO WE WERE JUST DOING SOME CONVERSATION PRACTICE.
HOW DOES THAT TURN INTO A HOSTESS CLUB SKIT? *HA HA!*
REALLY? IS THAT RIGHT, RUI-CHAN?
WE THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU JUST WANTED TO BE LEFT ALONE.
IN THAT CASE, LET'S BE FRIENDS!
WE WANTED THAT, TOO!
...I-
IF YOU WANT, I GUESS ...
AH HA HA! I GUESS THAT PART OF YOU WON'T CHANGE, HUH?


SO YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF PERSONALITY.
TALK ABOUT HARD TO READ.
TSUKIKO-SAN, IS THE BATH HEATED YET?
YES, IT'S READY!
PHEW… GLAD EVERYTHING WORKED OUT IN THE END.
IT MADE ME WORRIED TO SEE ALL BY HER LONESOME, EVEN IF SHE IS TOO BLUNT.
BUT I WONDER HOW SHE MADE FRIENDS AT HER OLD SCHOOL.
RATTLE
ガラッ

WH-
SLAM
WHOA!
S-SORRY!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU ALREADY SAW ME NAKED ONCE.
NO, NO, NO!

THAT'S NOT THE POINT...
UMM...
THANK YOU... FOR TODAY.
EVERYTHING WORKED OUT THANKS TO YOU...
SURE...
NO PROBLEM...
S-SORRY AGAIN. REALLY...
I'LL COME BACK AFTER YOU GET OUT.
WHY DON'T YOU COME IN?

…
PARDON?
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
COME IN FOR A BIT…

CHAPTER 4: SIGNS

SWEET
LOVE
LOVE

WHY DON'T YOU...
...COME IN FOR A BIT?
WH-
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SAYING?!
WELL, YOU ALREADY TOOK YOUR CLOTHES OFF.
ERR... YEAH, BUT...!
Y'-KNOW, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE TECHNICALLY SIBLINGS, WE'RE STILL...
C-COULD THIS BE... ...WHAT I THINK IT IS?

DON'T TELL ME...!
SPLOOSH
ザば…
I THOUGHT THAT DAY WOULD ONLY BE A ONE-TIME THING...
...BUT MY BODY'S BEEN BURNING EVER SINCE AND I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE.
HAS SHE...
I'M BEGGING YOU!
アーン
MOAN
ア
MAKE LOVE TO ME ONE MORE TIME!
...BECOME MY SEX SLAVE?!
...
PSSSH
ブバ
PLIP
びち
PLIP
びち
THERE'S SOMETHING... I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU, ANYWAY.
A-ASK ME WHAT...?
ABOUT LAST NIGHT.
ギクッ
TWITCH

EVERYONE'S IN THE LIVING ROOM, RIGHT? SO...
...
ALL RIGHT ...
CLACK
ガチャ...

S-
SO WHAT'S UP?
WHY DID ...
...YOU TRY TO KISS HINA-NEE LAST NIGHT?
...

WHEN I SAW YOU...
...AT FIRST I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE KIND OF GUY WHO'D GO AFTER ANY GIRL,
AND JUST WROTE YOU OFF AS FICKLE.
BUT AFTER THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TODAY...
...I THOUGHT MAYBE I WAS WRONG.
BY ANY CHANCE...
...WERE YOU TRYING TO CHEER HINA-NEE UP?
...HUH?
ば FWIP
WHOOOA THERE!

DIDN'T HINA-NEE ASK YOU FOR ADVICE ABOUT HER BOYFRIEND?
ADVICE...?
IS...
...SENSEI HAVING SOME KIND OF TROUBLE?
...
IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, THEN THAT'S FINE.
FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.
I'LL GET OUT NOW.
WAIT! WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT—

GAHHH!
FORGET? SHE WANTS ME TO FORGET?
I CAN'T JUST DELETE SHIT LIKE A COMPUTER!

CLACK
ガチャ
MORNING!
OH, THERE'S MISO SOUP WITH DAIKON THIS MORNING!
LUCKY!
♪
♬
HM?
BY THE WAY,
WE HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE.
TODAY, WE'RE GOING TO THE WARD OFFICE...
...TO HAVE OUR MARRIAGE REGISTERED.

SO, YOU'LL FINALLY BE LEGALLY MARRIED!
I GUESS THAT MAKES TODAY YOUR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.
CONGRATS, MOM.
ALSO,
WE'RE THINKING OF HAVING DINNER OUT WITH JUST THE TWO OF US TONIGHT.
IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?
OF COURSE IT'S OKAY!
RIGHT?
RIGHT?!
WILL YOU THREE BE FINE ON YOUR OWN?
DON'T YOU WORRY!
LET ME REMIND YOU THAT I'M AN ADULT!
JUST DON'T BOOZE AROUND THE HOUSE AGAIN.
I'LL SHOW SOME RESTRAINT!

AL-RIGHTY!
IN THAT CASE...
...MAYBE I'LL GO ALL OUT ON DINNER TONIGHT!
NOW I'M REALLY WORRIED.
WOW, RUDE!
BE SURE TO GIVE YOUR SISTER A HAND, RUI.
SENSEI'S COOKING, HUH?
いたー」
たように台所へ向かっ
...she headed to the kitchen.
ば手料理を振舞おう
...maybe I'll show you some of my home cooking!"

I WONDER IF SENSEI'S A GOOD COOK.
...
様に見
て行ったか
を探り始めた。取
女の手際の良さに感心
したか
...began to search the cupboard. What she...
...admiring her obvious skill...
DINNER'S READY!
TA-DA!
HELP YOURSELVES!

...!
WHOA ... YOU MADE ALL THIS, SENSEI?
WITH RUI'S HELP.
WELL, DON'T MIND IF I...
THIS IS CRAZY GOOD!
YOU COULD OPEN A RESTAURANT WITH THIS! YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, HUH, SENSEI?
ACTUALLY, RUI WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THAT.
AH ...
SORRY...
THEN WHICH DISHES DID YOU MAKE, SENSEI?
MINE ARE ...

EDA-
MAME
THIS,
CHILLED
TOFU
THIS,
SLICED
TOMATO!
AND THIS!
...!
IS THIS REALLY... COOKING?
I CAN'T LET HINA-NEE DO THE SEASONING OR SHE'LL CREATE A BIOHAZARD.
YOU'RE SO TOUGH, RUI...
ARE YOU... LET DOWN?
N-NO WAY!
THESE EDAMAME ARE BOILED PERFECTLY!
AND THE THICKNESS OF THESE TOMATOES IS JUST RIGHT!
MUNCH ぱく
MUNCH ぱく
MUNCH ぱく
MUNCH ぱく
YOU'RE SO NICE, NATSUO-KUN...
WHAT A SAINT.

WELL ...
IT'S ALL ONE PIECE...
...I GUESS, IN A WAY, THIS JUST LIKE SENSEI.
CLINK カチャ
カチャ CLINK
SORRY TO MAKE YOU CLEAN UP.
THIS IS EATING INTO YOUR WRITING TIME, HUH?
NO PROBLEM.
YOU GUYS DID MAKE DINNER, AFTER ALL.
HM?
WHERE'S RUI, ANYWAY?
PROBABLY READING IN HER ROOM.
SHE USUALLY HEADS STRAIGHT TO HER ROOM AFTER DINNER.

AS HER OLDER SISTER, THAT MAKES ME KINDA LONELY.
BOOOO ぶ!!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S BECAUSE YOU GET DRUNK SO QUICKLY, SENSEI?
HEY! FORMALITY!
NAMES!
AH...
S- SORRY...
I MEAN, MY BAD...
HE HE HE
IT IS SUDDEN, AFTER ALL.
I CAN'T EXPECT YOU TO CHANGE OVERNIGHT.
BUT WE ARE FAMILY NOW.
IT'S OKAY IF YOU GET USED TO IT LITTLE BY LITTLE.
IF YOU'RE EVER IN TROUBLE, FEEL FREE TO TALK TO ME ABOUT ANYTHING. DON'T HOLD BACK JUST BECAUSE I'M YOUR TEACHER.

SORRY IF IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO ASK, BUT...
...ARE THINGS...
...NOT GOING WELL WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND?
DID YOU HEAR THAT FROM RUI?
W- WELL...

...I DON'T REALLY FEEL...
...LIKE TALKING ABOUT THAT.
S- SORRY...
FORGET ABOUT ME!
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY WORRIES, NATSUO-KUN?
BAM
LAY IT ON YOUR BIG SISTER!
HUH? ME?
UHH... LET'S SEE...
WORRIES...
STARE

ONLY TO DO WITH YOU...
THIS, I GUESS.
MY CURLY HAIR.
YOU SAW MY BEDHEAD YESTERDAY.
IT'S A HASSLE TO FIX IN THE MORNING.
WHAT?!
YOU HAVE A COMPLEX ABOUT THAT?!
CLUNK
ガタ
I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY AT ALL!
IN FACT, I THINK YOUR BEDHEAD IS CUTE!
TO BE HONEST, I'M ACTUALLY KINDA JEALOUS...
...OF YOUR FLUFFY HAIR.
...!
ドキ
BADUM

MY HAIR'S SUPER STRAIGHT AND FINE. IT BARELY HAS ANY VOLUME.
HERE, FEEL IT.
SWISH
シュル…
WHOA…
IT'S SO…
…SILKY.
TICKLE
こしょ
TICKLE
こしょ
SNAP
はっ
HWAH!
AH HA HA!
HEY, THAT TICKLES!
YOUR GUARD WAS DOWN!
YOUR FACE WAS JUST BEGGING ME TO MESS WITH YOU.
WHAT'S WITH THAT?!
YOU'RE JUST SO OPEN ALL THE TIME.
SLIP
スルッ
AH…!

W-
WATCH YOURSELF...
SORRY...

Bピロ Rル Rル
Rル Rル Rル ッ
ピロB ルR ルR ルR
Bピロ Rル Rル Rル
ピロB ルR ルR ルR ルR ッ
ピロ ル B ル R R ル R ル R R ッ
Bピロ R ル
Rル Rル Rル ッ
B R R ピロ ル ル
22:37
SHUU HAGIWARA
MOBILE
...HELLO?

SHUU... HAGIWARA...
UH-HUH...
WHAT?
YEAH... YEAH...
... NOW?
ALL RIGHT.
BYE...
BOOP
...I'M GONNA HEAD OUT FOR A MINUTE.
HUH?
THIS LATE?
IT'S DANGER-OUS...!
DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE RIGHT OUT FRONT.
STAY INSIDE, OKAY?
KATHUNK

DAMN IT.
IT'S ALREADY BEEN TWENTY MINUTES ...
22:59
-30 (WED.)
MAYBE I SHOULD CHECK ON HER.
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS ...
ENOUGH!
KER
CHACK

カチャンッ
CLACK
SEN-SEI?!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
SEN–
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT'S NOTHING, REALLY.
EVERYTHING'S FINE...
...!
"FINE?"
YOU DON'T LOOK FINE TO ME!
YOU'RE AS PALE AS A GHOST!
AND YOU'RE SHAKING LIKE–
ピン
DONG
ポ
DING

...!
DING
ピ
ン
MOBILE
ポ
ン
DONG
ピ
ン
DONG
DING
ポ
ー
ン

CHAPTER 5: THE REAL YOU

DING DONG
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

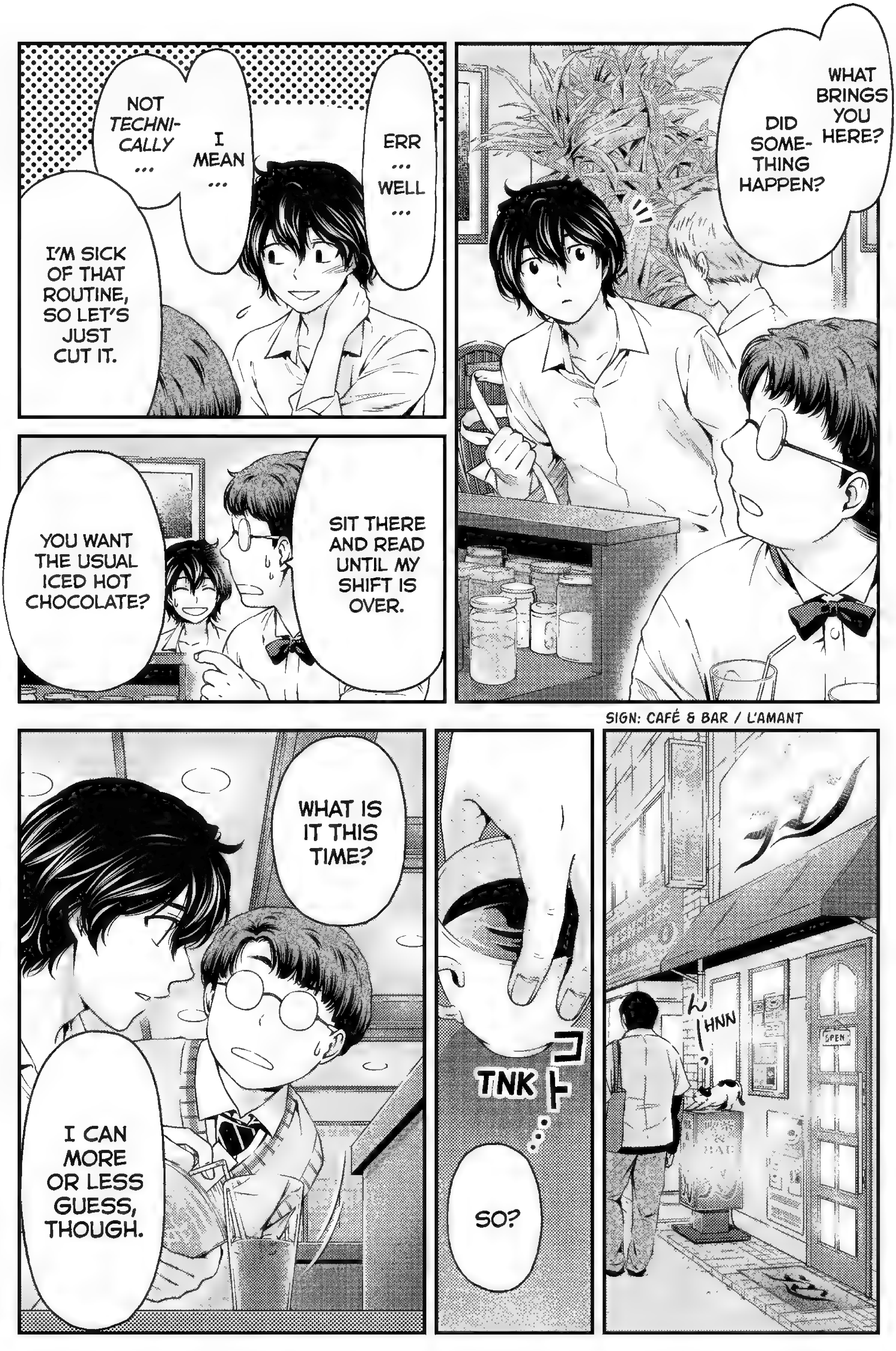
REALLY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER...
BUT...
WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY WON'T YOU ANSWER THE DOOR?
...!
DING DING DING
DONG DONG DONG
ピピピ
ポーンポーンポーン
ERR!
UM...
?
?
THUD
カシャン
CLACK
ガリ
チャ

WE'RE HOOOOME!
D- DAD?!
PHEEEW. SORRY WE'RE SO LATE!
BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU OPEN THE DOOR RIGHT AWAY?
WE EVEN BROUGHT A LITTLE SOMETHING TO EAT FOR YOU GUYS!
BOOOO
SORRY... JUST A LITTLE MIX UP...
MIX UP?
DID YOU THREE MAKE SURE TO HAVE DINNER?
UH... YEAH...
WELL, WHATEVER!
YOU GUYS SHOULD TRY THESE.
THE RESTAURANT'S DELUXE CHEESECAKE WAS TO DIE FOR!

SORRY ...

DING
キーン
DONG
コーン
DANG
カーン…
HEY, FUJI-SAN.
GOOD WORK WATCHING THE SHOP.
HOWDY!
JINGLE
カラン
コローン

YO.
IT'S NATSUO-KUUUN!
HEY, NATSUO-CHAN. WELCOME.
SUP, FUMIYA!
GOOD AFTERNOON KOBAYASHI-SAN, AYANO-SAN.
JEEZ ...
HAVEN'T I ALWAYS TOLD YOU TO CALL ME MARIE?
M.A.R.I.E!
HELLO, MASAKI KOBAYASHI-SAN.
DAMN BRAT!


WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
ERR... WELL...
I MEAN...
NOT TECHNICALLY...
I'M SICK OF THAT ROUTINE, SO LET'S JUST CUT IT.
SIT THERE AND READ UNTIL MY SHIFT IS OVER.
YOU WANT THE USUAL ICED HOT CHOCOLATE?
ん ー HNN
OPEN
TNK コト
...
SO?
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?
I CAN MORE OR LESS GUESS, THOUGH.

SIGN: CAFÉ & BAR / L'AMANT

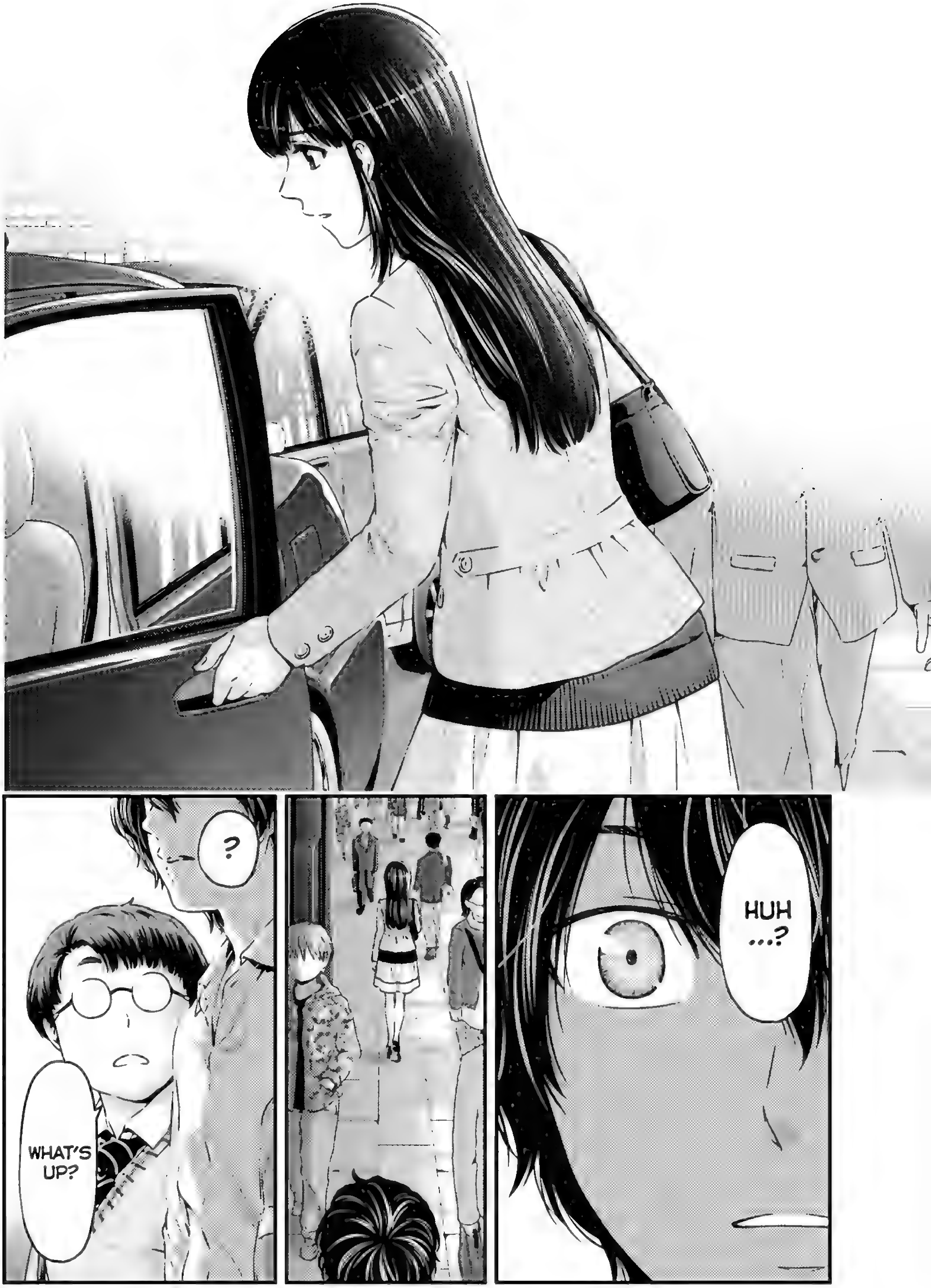
IT'S ABOUT YOUR TEACHER OR HER SISTER AGAIN, RIGHT?
LAST NIGHT...
...SENSEI WAS CALLED OUT BY HER BOYFRIEND,
AND SHE CAME BACK INSIDE NEARLY IN PIECES.
THERE'S ALSO THE TIME I FOUND HER CRYING ALL BY HERSELF BEFORE.
I FIGURE THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS PRETTY ROCKY,
OR SOMETHING.
BUT I'M NOT SURE IF IT'S RIGHT FOR ME TO STICK MY NOSE INTO THEIR BUSINESS.
I JUST FEEL KINDA GLOOMY OVER IT ALL...
WHAT'S THIS? STEALING SOMEONE'S GIRLFRIEND?
JUST GIVE HER A DOUBLE SLAP THEN EMBRACE HER AND PLANT A PASSIONATE KISS RIGHT ON HER LIPS IF YOU WANT TO BE QUICK AND SIMPLE ABOUT IT.
SORRY, BUT I'M ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR ADVICE I CAN USE.

C'MON... KIDS SHOULD LISTEN TO WHAT ADULTS HAVE TO SAY.
MUMBLE MUMBLE ブツ ブツ
WELL...
...I'M PRETTY SURE THAT GLOOMINESS YOU'RE FEELING...
...IS PROBABLY JUST JEALOUSY.
YOU GOT JEALOUS BECAUSE YOU FELT THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER MAN NEAR HER.
JEALOUSY...?
UH-HUH.
I KNOW, BECAUSE I BATTLE THAT SAME FEELING EVERY DAY.
HUH?! THERE'S SOMEONE YOU LIKE, FUMIYA?!
FOR EXAMPLE...
...THE SUPER CUTE OFFICE WORKER WHO CAME IN WITH HER AFFAIR PARTNER YESTERDAY!
YOU MEAN A CUSTOMER?!
OR THE YOUNG HOUSEWIFE WHO COMES TO ASK THE OWNER ADVICE ABOUT HER HUSBAND'S ABUSE!
YOU SHOULD LEAVE THAT SCUMBAG.
MARRIED WOMEN, TOO?!

I WISH THEY'D ALL JUST...
...BREAK UP WITH THEIR LOVERS AND DATE ME, INSTEAD!
DID YOU SAY ANYTHING TO THEM?
NOPE,
I JUST OVERHEARD THEIR CONVERSATION.
HOW'D IT GO?!
WELL...
...WITH DOWNCAST EYES, THE MISTRESS IN QUESTION BROKE THE SILENCE LIKE THIS...
"WHAT ON EARTH...
"...ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?"
"I'M GOING TO LEAVE MY WIFE."
TWINKLE
"BUT I CAN'T DO IT RIGHT AWAY..."
BINGO!
HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
THAT'S SUCH A CLICHÉ LINE IN DRAMAS.
I CAN'T BELIEVE PEOPLE ACTUALLY SAY IT.

THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY!
YOU'RE NOT EVEN THINKING ABOUT A FUTURE WITH ME, ARE YOU?!
THAT'S NOT TRUE ...!
THEN WHEN WILL WE FINALLY BE ABLE TO BE TOGETHER?!
W-WELL ...
DEAR!
WHO IS THAT WOMAN ?!
BAM
UH-OH! NOW THE WIFE ENTERS THE SCENE!
HUH?! DID THAT ACTUALLY HAPPEN?!
NOPE!
HOW DARE YOU MAKE A PASS AT MY HUSBAND, YOU THIEVING HUSSY!
WHAT WAS THAT, YOU FRIGID BITCH ?!
HE'S MINE!
STOP IT, YOU TWO!
んぎぎ… NRR GRR GRR
DON'T FIGHT OVER ME!
WHAT A CURIOUS CAT FIGHT.
ウフフッ HE HE HE

あははは…
AH HA HA HA
I DIDN'T EXPECT KOBAYASHI-SAN TO JUMP IN THEN.
MY SIDES HURT...
THE WIFE PART WAS FICTION, BUT I WENT WITH IT, ANYWAY.
KOWADA BONDS
BUT... I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER NOW.
THANKS, FUMIYA.
WELL, IF YOU EVER FEEL GLOOMY AGAIN, JUST LISTEN TO MY TALES OF JEALOUSY AND...
OH! LOOK OVER THERE! SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!
HUH?
SHE'S THE ONE WHO CAME IN YESTERDAY!
THE MISTRESS!


HUH ...?
?
WHAT'S UP?

WERE YOU ...
...TRYING TO CHEER HINA-NEE UP?
WHOA...
HUH? WAIT...
DON'T TELL ME...!
I WONDER WHAT THIS FEELING IS.
IT'S AS IF ALL THE PIECES OF SOME AWFUL PUZZLE ARE FALLING INTO PLACE.

KNOCK
コン
KNOCK
コン
COM-ING!
NATSUO-KUN!
SORRY... DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
UH, SURE. COME ON IN.

HAVE A SEAT ON THE BED.
...
SENSEI ...
YOU'RE NOT...
...HAVING AN AFFAIR, ARE YOU?

... WHAT?
WHERE ... DID THAT COME FROM?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
MY FRIEND SAID HE SAW YOU...
...WITH YOUR AFFAIR PARTNER.
... WHAT'S WITH THAT?
SO HE JUST SAW ME TOGETHER WITH GUY.
YOU CAN'T JUST ASSUME THAT–
"I'M GOING TO LEAVE MY WIFE."
"BUT I CAN'T DO IT RIGHT AWAY ..."

...
HMM...
AND?
...
HUH...?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, AND?
SO IT'S REALLY TRUE, THEN?!
...
ANSWER ME! PLEASE!
IS THIS WHAT YOU MEANT BY "THINGS ONLY ADULTS WOULD UNDERSTAND"?!

...
THAT'S RIGHT.
CHILDREN HAVE NO PLACE SETTING FOOT...
...IN AN ADULT'S WORLD.
NOW, THAT'S ENOUGH, ALL RIGHT?
THIS CONVERSATION IS OVER.
WAIT...!
GIVE IT A REST.
THIS HAS... ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, NATSUO-KUN.
DON'T BUTT INTO WHAT I—
GRAB

ぐ
SQUEEZE
っ...
SHOVE
SLAP
...
I'M SORRY ...
...BUT I–
YANK

MMF...
SEN...
...SEI...
CREAK

は!!
AH …!
POMF
!
RIP

…to be continued.

FIRST VACATION

BY SASUGA KEI

TRAVEL
SO ABOUT OUR HONEYMOON...
WE WERE THINKING OF GOING ON ONE DURING GOLDEN WEEK*.
IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?
WOW! A HONEYMOON!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
HAKONE, SINCE IT'S NEARBY.
AWESOME!
FINE BY ME. HAVE A GOOD TIME.
HM?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NATSUO?

---

*OFTEN THE LONGEST PERIOD OF VACATION TIME FOR MANY JAPANESE WORKERS, GOLDEN WEEK IS THE PERIOD DESCRIBING A SERIES OF HOLIDAYS HELD BETWEEN APRIL 29 TO MAY 5, STARTING WITH THE BIRTHDAY OF THE FORMER EMPEROR HIROHITO AND ENDING WITH CHILDREN'S DAY. MANY JAPANESE NATIONALS TAKE PAID TIME OFF DURING THE PERIOD TO SPEND TIME WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

THE WHOLE FAMILY'S GOING.
WOW!
THIS INN HAS SUCH A GREAT ATMOSPHERE!
I'M SURPRISED YOU GOT A RESERVATION.
THE OWNER OF THIS INN IS ONE OF MY COMPANY'S CLIENTS.
THE ROOM'S REALLY NICE, TOO!
THERE ARE YUKATA*.
NICE! LET'S GET CHANGED.
WHY DON'T WE TRY OUT THE BATHS FIRST?

*TRANSLATED AS "BATHING CLOTH," YUKATA ARE A CASUAL VERSION OF THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE GARMENT, THE *KIMONO*. YUKATA CONSIST OF A ROBE FASTENED WITH A SASH AND WERE TRADITIONALLY WORN AFTER BATHING IN A COMMUNAL BATH OR HOT SPRING. RECENTLY, THE YUKATA HAS ALSO BECOME A COMMON WAY OF DRESSING UP FOR SUMMER FESTIVALS, WITH INCREASINGLY FASHIONABLE PATTERNS BECOMING MORE AVAILABLE. THEY ARE ALSO A STAPLE GARMENT FOR GUESTS VISITING TRADITIONAL JAPANESE INNS.

APPARENTLY THE OPEN-AIR HOT SPRING IS THIS INN'S SELLING POINT.
SPSSH
ザバァ…
AHHHH...
THIS IS HEAVEN...♥
WE CAN EVEN VIEW THE MOUNTAINS WHILE WE BATHE. HOW LOVELY...
I WONDER IF THE MEN'S SIDE IS BUILT THE SAME.
NATSUO-KUUUN!
CAN YOU HEAR ME?

...
YEAH, I HEAR YOU!
IS THE MEN'S SIDE THE SAME AS OURS?
I CAN'T SEE YOUR SIDE, SO I HAVE NO IDEA.
OH, YEAH.
あははは AH HA HA HA
...
BY THE WAY, HINA. DID YOUR BREASTS GROW AGAIN?
DO YOUR BRAS STILL FIT?
MMM... I GUESS THEY HAVE GOTTEN A LITTLE TIGHT.
IT MIGHT BE TIME TO BUY NEW ONES.
DON'T WORRY!
YOURS WILL GROW WHEN YOU GET OLDER, RUI!
YOURS HAVE BEEN LARGE SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL.
HUH? HAVE THEY?
I'M NOT JEALOUS OR ANYTHING!
MOOSH
EEK!

THEY'RE JUST BAGS OF FAT, ANYWAY.
フィッ
FWIP
MAYBE YOU SHOULD LOSE WEIGHT, INSTEAD?
WHA-
THEY DON'T JUST GET BIGGER FROM GAINING WEIGHT, Y'KNOW!
SPLOOSH
THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF FACTORS, LIKE CERTAIN FOODS AND MASSAGES!
むに GROPE
むに GROPE
HERE, IF YOU INCREASE THE CIRCULATION LIKE THIS...
むに GROPE
HEY!
むに GROPE
むに GROPE
KEEP DOING THIS AND YOU'LL END UP WITH SHAPELY BOOBS.
HEY... STOP!
AH!
PAY ATTENTION TO THE FLOW OF LYMPH NODES AND-
ALL RIGHT! I GET IT! JUST-
AH!
AAH!
HEY, KIDDO. MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET OUT. YOUR FACE IS BEET RED.
NO... I CAN'T GET OUT QUITE YET...

PHEW. DINNER SURE WAS DELICIOUS, WASN'T IT?
I ATE TOO MUCH. I'M STUFFED.
OKAY,
WHY DON'T WE GET TO BED NOW?
I'M GONNA DRINK A LITTLE LONGER.
JUST DON'T DRINK ALL NIGHT.
...
I CAN'T SLEEP...
MAYBE I'M A LITTLE TOO TENSE, AFTER ALL.
POMF
URGH!

FWIP
!
S-SENSEI...
YOU'RE IN THE WRONG FUTON.
HEY...
SLIP
...!
ERR...
ガラッ
SLIDE
HEY!
ARE YOU BACK FROM THE BATHROOM?
HELP ME MOVE SENSEI, WILL–

はふっ
POMF
!
WHA ?!
HUH?
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE.
AM I DYING?
THE NEXT MORNING
MMM!
I SLEPT GREAT!
THE FUTONS AT INNS ARE SO COMFORTABLE!
DID YOU SLEEP WELL, NATSUO?
NOT REALLY.

AFTERWORD

Thank you very much for reading *Domestic Girlfriend* volume one! You might have been surprised to see it open with a bed scene, I bet. As readers of my last work *Ge - Good Ending* are likely aware, when asked if I'm a fan of sexual themes, my immediate response is, "Absolutely!" So I hope you'll pardon me for my usual style. While watching various movies and dramas in order to gather references for my second series, I came to the realization that I absolutely adore forbidden love. I think that when it comes to works of art, unless the creator is excited while drawing, the passion behind the piece won't be conveyed to the viewer. As such, this work became jam packed with taboo elements. Just as watching a good drama will make my heart race, I hope reading this story filled you with excitement and anticipation, as well. Considering how serious the main story is, I decided to make the extra chapter for this volume light and a little naughty. I hope you enjoyed reading. It would be nice if I can share some production stories at the end of the next volume, as well. Well then, I hope to see you again in volume two!

SASUGA KEI

Domestic Girlfriend 1

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